

**MASSIVE 10th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL!**

# PCZONE

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**WORLD EXCLUSIVE**

## DEUS EX 2



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**BY COMPO:** Name the bearded genius behind *Deus Ex 2*?

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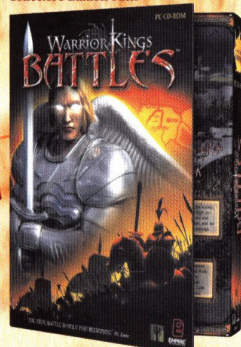
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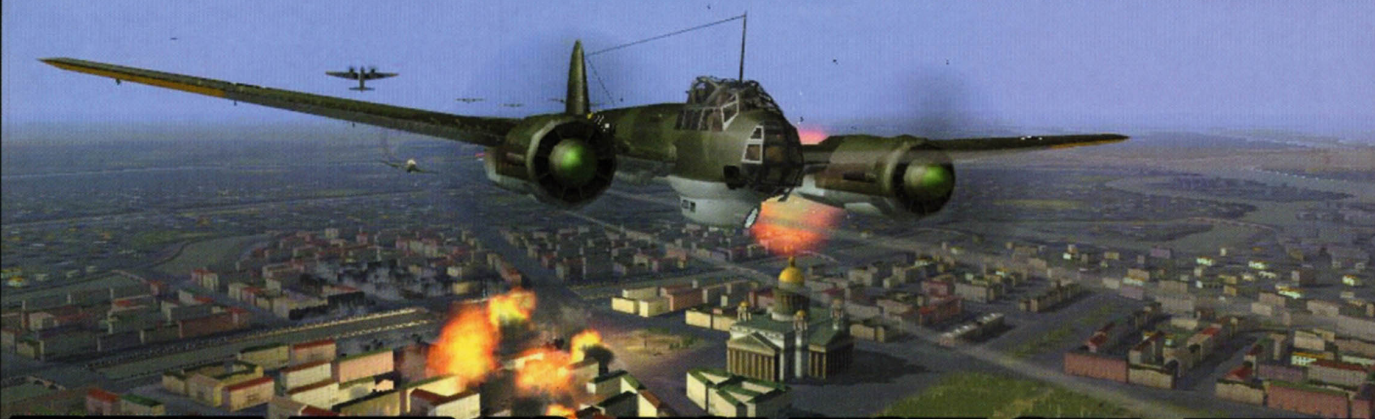




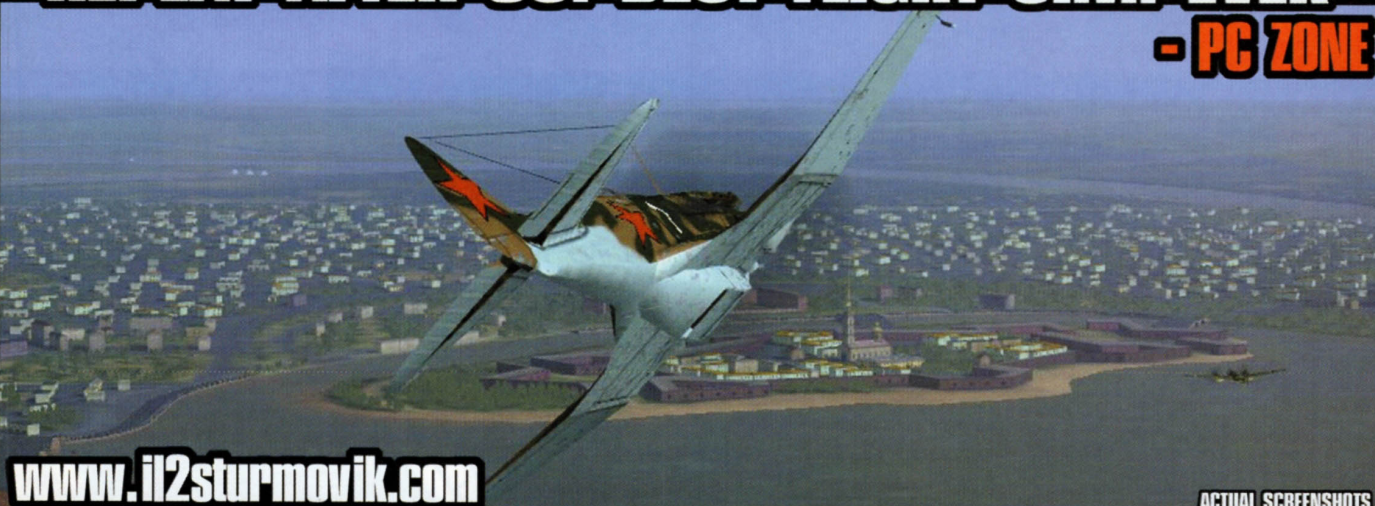


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# DEUS EX 2 P30



PCZONE  
ISSUE 127

The biggest, the best, the most revolutionary action-RPG ever is spawning an even more breathtaking sequel. Find out how it's shaping up in our massive six page, World's First Play preview on page 30

## Happy Birthday To Us



As the first ever dedicated PC games mag in the UK, we're also the first to hit the magic milestone of ten years. Funnily enough I was first turned on to PC games in the year *Zone* launched, way back in '93. Perfectly content

playing *Speedball 2* and *Sensible Soccer* 23.5 hours a day on my trusty Amiga, the only contact I had with a PC pre-1993 was copying someone's essay off a machine that terrified me.

After I left University I got a call from an old mate who reckoned he'd just got hold of the best game in the world. "Yeah, yeah," I said, "Doom, you say?" I'll be over tomorrow sometime. And that tomorrow was to be the day that changed my life forever. I played *Doom* solidly for the next year or two, bought myself a PC as soon as I could afford one, and the rest is history.

Sitting atop the longest-running PC games mag ten years on is an honour that I can't put into words, but we've done our best in a bumper issue that marks the return of Mr. Cursor and Charlie Brooker, as well as featuring a load of specials marking our 10th Birthday, and a world exclusive shot from the game that everyone's talking about, *Doom III*. As a special thank-you to all our loyal subscribers, we've also included this as a limited-edition art print, which you can frame and put on your bedroom wall - it's just the sort of thing you'd want to wake up to in the morning. If you're not a subscriber you can still get a copy of it by pledging yourself to a new subscription - turn to page 151 for details on how to join us as we evolve over the next ten years.

And talking of evolution, our cover game this month, *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War*, is just the title that could mark the first stage in the next ten years of the PC. The first game was one of the best ever and the sequel looks like it's going to live up to its legacy. Jamie went all the way to Austin, Texas, to look at the game and talk to Warren Spector about his vision, but when he informed them it was our 10th birthday Jamie was led into a small room and let loose on the code. He might only have been allowed an hour or two with his hands on the keyboard but he was the only journalist from any magazine in the world to be allowed to play the game. You can find out what he thought of it all, starting on page 30. Enjoy the rest of the issue - here's to another ten years of fun...

Dave Woods  
Editor

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### VIETCONG P86

Enter the jungles of 'Nam in this long-awaited shooter. Enter this month's *PC Zone* and read our long-awaited world exclusive review



### C&C: GENERALS P94

The biggest name in RTS goes 3D. But will it command respect and conquer all? Find out in our definitive four page review inside

### COVER DISKS P140



#### ■ 6 HUGE EXCLUSIVES...

Splinter Cell, Blitzkrieg, Delta Force: Black Hawk Down, IGI 2: Covert Strike, The Gladiators multiplayer demo and the UT 2003 bonus pack.

#### AND DEMOS OF...

Anno 1503, Star Wraith 3, The Watchmaker, NASCAR 2003, Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc, Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance and Laser Squad Nemesis.

#### ■ DVD EXCLUSIVE: DVD ZONE

3 demos not on the CDs, including American Conquest, Homeplanet and Bikini Karate Babes. Plus all the featured mods in ModWatch. For the full disc contents turn to page 140.



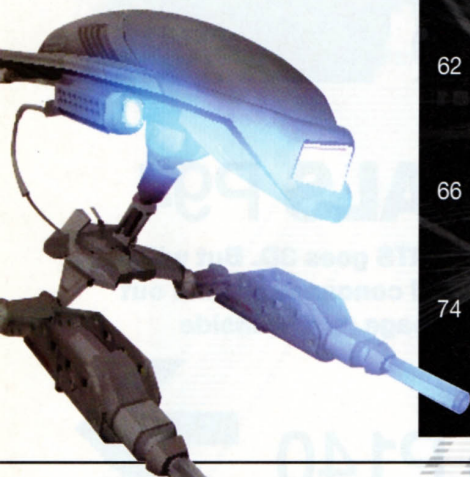


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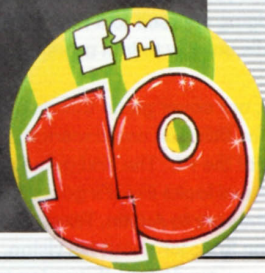
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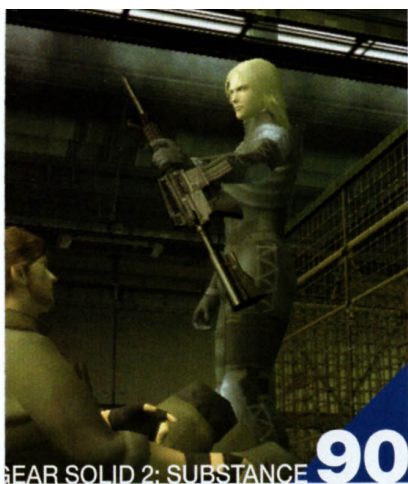
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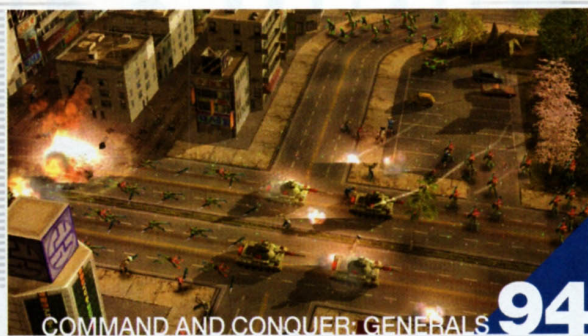
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**PCZONE 7**



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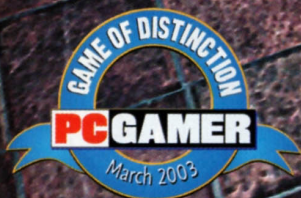
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Major Tom to...

FIRST  
Look!

# GROUND CONTROL 2



World Exclusive! Massive Entertainment reveals its storming RTS sequel

■ FUTURE WARRIOR Jamie Sefton

## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Massive Entertainment  
**PUBLISHER** VU Games  
**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** Q4 2003  
**WEBSITE** www.massive.se

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Sequel to one of the best RTS games ever
- New scalable 3D graphics engine
- Brand new units to play with
- Introduces orbital support weapons
- Improved multiplayer options

**SWEDEN HAS** been responsible for some pretty important popular culture over the years – ABBA, Bjorn Borg, Volvo and eye-watering hardcore pornography. However, our Scandinavian chums have also spawned one of the best real-time strategy games ever in *Ground Control*.

Released in late 2000, Massive Entertainment's title shifted the focus away from unit creation and resource management to the actual battles, creating a hugely entertaining action-packed game that received 87 per cent in *PC ZONE* issue 92. Now the team is back with a beautiful-looking sequel – *Ground Control 2: Operation Exodus* – and we spoke exclusively to Massive Entertainment's lead game designer, Henrik Sebring, to get all the juicy details.

"One of our biggest goals with GC2 is to put the fun back into combat," says Sebring. "If the player has massed a huge tank supported infantry force, we want it to be fun to actually use, instead of just sending it off to kill the enemy base." *Ground Control 2* takes place 300 years after the original game, a period where the powerful corporations that previously dominated space have been superseded by two factions – the democratic Northern Star Alliance (goodies) and the fascist, Roman-inspired Terran Empire (baddies). You play as Captain Jacob Angelus, an officer in the NSA, and begin your struggle against the Terrans on the Earth-like planet of Morningstar Prime.

## DEATH FROM THE SKIES

"We've got a completely new set of units in GC2, with a nice spread of infantry, tanks and air units. In addition to combat units, the player will also have a full complement of support vehicles to wage war with, and some of these will certainly have never been



High-noon style shoot-outs will never go out of fashion.



Even rigging up new structures looks impressive with the new engine.

seen in a RTS game before," says Sebring. Although the emphasis of the game is on the battles, there'll be a light aspect of resource management, with acquisition points available to use for battlefield scans, for example, or reinforcing your army. "However, there will be no peons, slaves or harvesters in GC2 – everything is geared towards combat," he adds.

One of the biggest additions to the GC universe will be the new orbital support weapons. "These include everything from vision-blocking smokescreens, tactical nukes, EMP blasts and radar scans," continues Sebring. "They really add a new dimension to the gameplay and open up a whole new chapter of tactical options." This will be especially true for the online

multiplayer mode, which will also have an expanded "drop-in" element to allow players to join in an ongoing GC2 game.

Massive Entertainment has developed a completely new 3D engine for GC2 that utilises the latest generation of cards. According to Sebring, this will generate visuals that will "blow the player's mind out", with gorgeous water effects, detailed landscapes and a huge draw distance. In addition, the engine will be fully scalable, so gamers with less-powerful PCs can still sign up to the Northern Star Alliance. Judging by these sizzling screenshots, *Operation Exodus* is going to be mightily impressive by the time it has launched later this year – stay tuned for a hands-on preview in the coming months. **PCZ**



Massive's priority has been to put the 'fun' back into combat.



**"One of our biggest goals with GC2 is to put the fun back into combat"**



Rippling water, swaying trees, floating clouds – plenty to look at between the thermo-nuclear clashes.

#### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Like an increasing number of RTS games, *Ground Control 2* ditches most of the resource management to concentrate on the thrilling battles.

#### AI

Your computer-controlled soldiers will now act much more realistically, changing tactics as the battle progresses.

#### GRAPHICS ENGINE

Massive's new 3D engine can render impressive draw distances, as well as life-like landscapes and vegetation.

#### SUPPORT WEAPONS

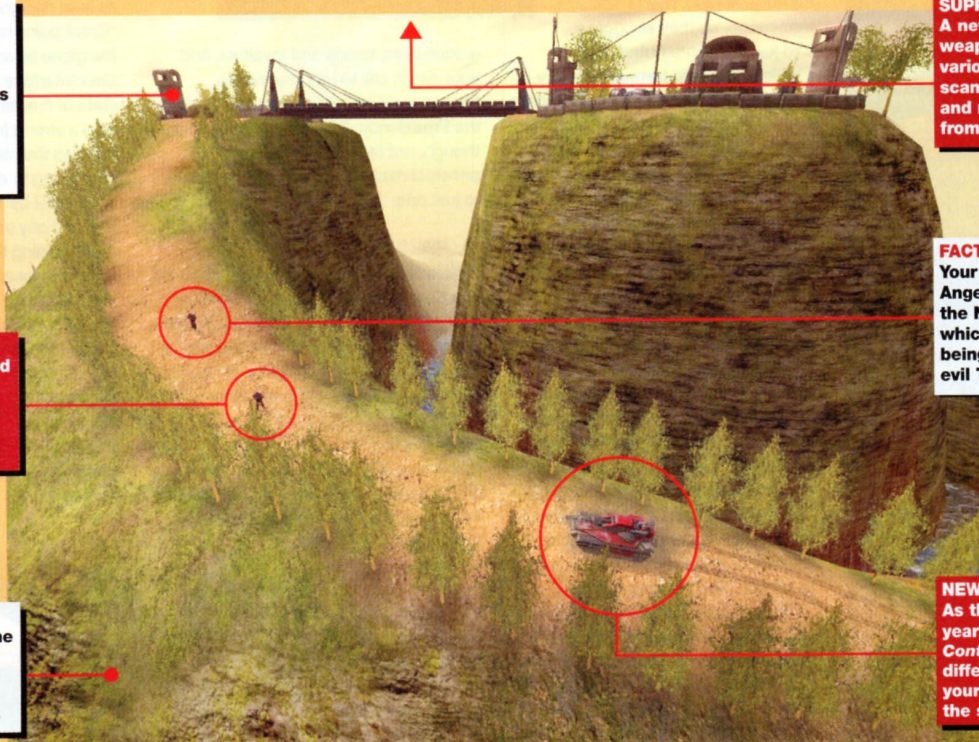
A new set of orbital weapons can perform various tasks, including scanning the battle area and raining down death from above with nukes.

#### FACTIONS

Your beefy captain Jacob Angelus takes command of the Northern Star Alliance, which is on the verge of being wiped out by the evil Terran Empire.

#### NEW UNITS

As the sequel is set 300 years after the first *Ground Control*, a completely different set of units are at your disposal – check out the smart new tanks.







ALL THE NEWS, VIEWS AND RUMOURS FROM THE WORLD OF PC GAMING

# BULLETIN



## BIRTHDAY BOY

■ ASSOCIATE EDITOR Jamie Sefton

▲ Hi there. It's now ten years since *PC ZONE* began – an extraordinary milestone considering most videogames magazines have a shelf-life of only a couple of years (or months, as in the case of my last publication). Having only been nestled in *PC ZONE*'s ample bosom since the November issue, I've felt really honoured to be part of these birthday celebrations – especially as I've been an avid reader of this fine rag since the mid 1990s.

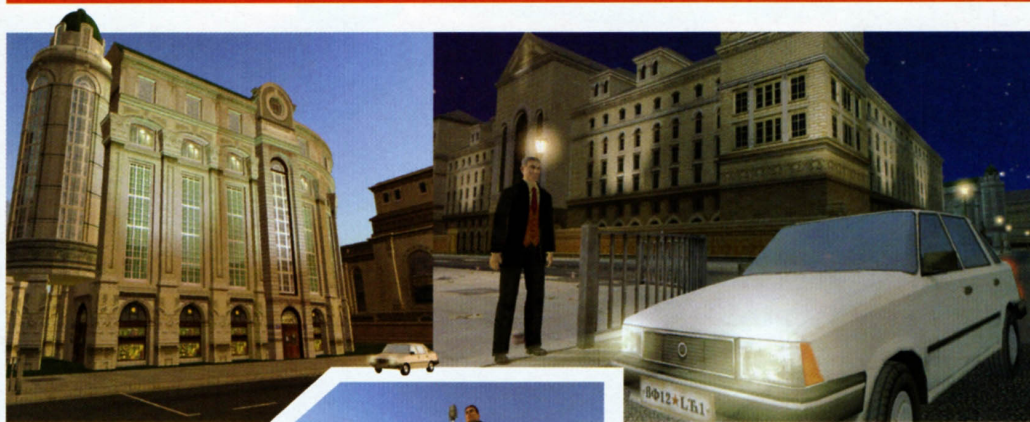
My favourite moment this issue had to be joining in the heated Supertest discussion about the best PC games over the last decade with a gaggle of past and present *ZONE* scribes. Witnessing the return of the legendary Charlie Brooker as he went head-to-head with Steve Hill over their hatred/love of *Championship Manager* was very special indeed – see page 66 for the terrifying pizza and beer-fuelled results.

In *Bulletin*, we begin with an exclusive interview and new screenshots from Elixir Studios' *Republic: The Revolution*, which despite the huge delay is looking more promising by the minute. We also have the first visuals on *Men Of Valor: Vietnam*, the new game from 2015 (creator of the monumental *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault*), and the *Neverwinter Nights* expansion pack, *Shadows Of Undrentide* (page 20).

Our special report this month (page 16) investigates the growing sophistication of in-game physics in titles like our stunning cover game *Deus Ex II: Invisible War*, plus we have snippets of news on THQ's forthcoming PC line-up and the single-player full 3D version of Codo Technologies' *Laser Squad Nemesis: Earth*. Happy Birthday *PC ZONE*!

# VIVE LA REVOLUTION!

WORLD-SHATTERING STRATEGY TITLE *REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION* RESURFACES – EXCLUSIVE NEW SHOTS!



**AS BOB MARLEY** once sang, a hungry man is an angry man, and few groups could claim to be quite as hungry as strategy gamers in the early 21st century. Hungry, that is, for innovation, as they struggle to find joy in a genre putrid with predictability and formula. The cry on the streets is "revolution!", and from a high-ceilinged office in North London, that cry is about to be answered...

*Republic: The Revolution* is one of the most extraordinary games ever devised. It mixes deep strategic elements with an incredibly rich and detailed city simulation, a strong non-linear plot and groundbreaking behavioural AI for its million strong populace. What's more, it's almost finished. Resurfacing after a gruelling six-month crunch, the lads at Elixir Studios gave us a fresh look at their insurrectionary debut, and submitted themselves to a thorough probing by us.

"At Christmas we went Code Complete, which means that all code features are now in," says director Demis Hassabis, swiftly bringing us up to speed. "Next stop is Alpha."

Remarkably, considering its lofty ambitions, the game has changed little since conception. The multiplayer mode has been put on the back-burner, but otherwise things are going to plan. The setting is still the vast, heavily-populated city of Novistrana, the citizens still have

unique lives, needs and loyalties, and your aim is still to use any means necessary to win them over and seize the Presidency. A few things have altered though, not least the reduction of principal rivals from more than a dozen to just one.

## EL PRESIDENTE

"There is one major enemy that threatens you," explains assistant designer Ben Gonshaw, "and that's the President. He has the military, the secret police and all the other machinery of power at his disposal. However, there are other factions in Novistrana, from Russian Mafia to hired armies to money launderers. The change is that previously all the parties had their eye on becoming President. We have added richness to the game by recognising that most of these factions are content to have a small slice of the pie. As long as no one interferes with them they'll probably keep

"This next song goes out to all the ladies."

to themselves." Of course, in a game built around devious scheming and politicking, that's never going to happen.

This shift in focus is clearly an attempt to make *Republic* more manageable, and as lead designer Adrian Carless explains: "Great pains have been taken to make the game as accessible as possible. The User Interface has been in a constant state of flux as we refine it further. There's now a strong (non-linear) plot that ensures the player is never at a loss for something to do, and knows exactly what must be done if their Revolution is to stand any chance of success."

Promising signs from a game that at one time appeared impossibly daunting. You'll still have an immense amount of freedom, and an enormous, immersive gameworld in which to use it. We'll find out just how playable the whole thing is in a full hands-on very soon.



Publisher: Eidos  
Developer: Elixir Studios  
ETA: May  
Website: [www.elixir-studios.co.uk](http://www.elixir-studios.co.uk)





**16**  
**SPECIAL REPORT**  
Developments in game physics



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# Back to War

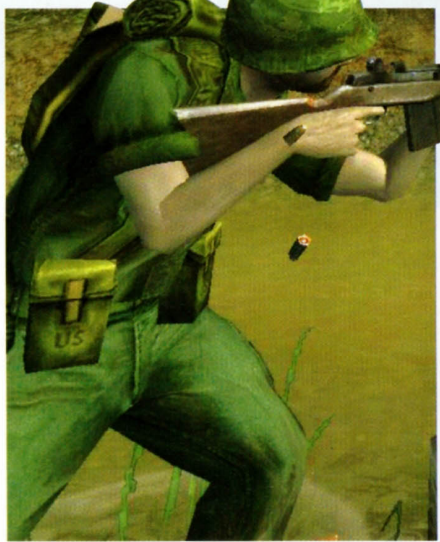
ALLIED ASSAULT DEVELOPER 2015 ANNOUNCES  
MEN OF VALOR: VIETNAM

**THE JUNGLES** of south-east Asia are about to be lit up with extreme gunfire yet again with the announcement of a new title from 2015, the team behind the magnificent WWII shooter *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault*.

*Men Of Valor: Vietnam* is a FPS set during the infamous conflict that will put you in the fatigues of a US soldier desperately fighting his way through various search and destroy missions around famous battlezones, such as Danang airbase. Players are joined in combat by AI-controlled troops, although you can also yomp through the single-player missions with other online veterans in a special co-op mode.

Built on the new enhanced *Unreal* engine, you can expect the dense jungle terrain to be packed with realistic trees and vegetation, as well as detailed soldiers waiting patiently to jump out and riddle you with sub-machine gun bullets.

*Men Of Valor: Vietnam* is still a way off, with a release date set for 2004. In the meantime, check out the exclusive review of Pteradon's rival napalm-sniffing blaster *Vietcong* on page 86.



I love the swell of polygons in the...

- Publisher: VU Games
- Developer: 2015
- ETA: 2004
- Website: [www.2015.com](http://www.2015.com)



Vietnam: it's the new World War III!

# YOU SEXY MUTHA...

EUTECHNYX DELIVER NEW SCREENSHOTS FROM BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

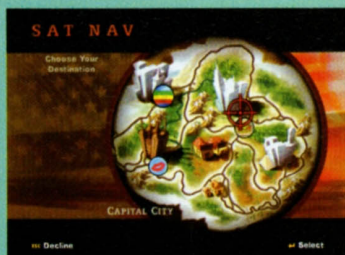
**LET'S BE HONEST** – there aren't many videogames where you can make a fortune from the pile cream delivery business. Well, *Big Mutha Truckers* has filled that hole (sorry) with a mission-based trading game where you live out your convoy fantasies driving around banjo-strumming in-bred southern USA in four massive rigs. Each city in the mythical Hick State County has its own levels of supply and demand, so it's up to you to decide what to buy and sell in each settlement – it's rather akin to a lorry-based, hillbilly version of space trading sim *Elite*. Well, almost. Plus, you're in competition with three

AI-controlled siblings that will put their foot down to try and beat you to the best deals.

*Big Mutha Truckers* features more than 24 missions, full damage modelling on all the vehicles, truck upgrades and plenty of wry stabs of humour at America's expense. Eutechnyx has also added new features just for the PC release, such as bonus cash for causing mass pile-ups and destroying other vehicles. "Sadly, we don't have any online play at the moment," says communications manager Kev Shaw. "We're saving that for the MMORPG..."



- Publisher: Empire
- Developer: Eutechnyx
- ETA: April
- Website: [www.eutechnyx.com](http://www.eutechnyx.com)



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# NEVER SAY NEVERWINTER AGAIN

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS: SHADOWS OF UNDRENTIDE – FIRST SHOTS!

**AFTER RELEASING** a free *Neverwinter Nights* add-on entitled *Witch's Wake* (available on last month's discs), Infogrames is about to unleash a whole new menagerie of monsters. *Shadows Of Undrentide* is a commercial expansion pack currently being co-developed by BioWare and FloodGate Entertainment and will feature a new single player campaign, grenade-like weapons, more mythical beasts and exotic new locales.

"Your character begins as the apprentice to a retired adventurer who's settled down in the unremarkable frontier town of Hilltop," according to Paul Neurath, creative director of FloodGate. "Then trouble strikes and our hero is drawn to the wastes of the great Anauroch desert, once home to a nation of wizards who lived in massive floating cities. Then things get dangerous..."

For budding dungeon-builders, *Shadows Of Undrentide* will add three new tile sets to the Aurora toolset – Winter Rural, Desert and Ruins – as well as new traps, magic items and treasure. "There are also new prestige classes, such as the secret agent-style Harper Scouts, that will be built into the campaign story," continues Neurath. "Plus we've over 40 new spells, including my personal favourite, the Bigby's Hand, which summons a giant, green glowing hand to pummel your enemies."

- Publisher: Infogrames
- Developer: BioWare/FloodGate
- ETA: Spring
- Website: www.bioware.com



Greater spell focus is one of the 30 new features.



When magical insects attack.

## INSANE IN THE BRAIN

Exclusive! Mad new info on FPS chiller *Call of Cthulhu*

**SOME 12 MONTHS** ago we were tracking *Call of Cthulhu* – a first-person horror game based on HP Lovecraft's dark imaginings – with great interest. Unfortunately the sale of publisher Fishtank to JoWood and a subsequent split with the new publisher meant CoC missed a mid-2002 launch date.

"The search for a publisher has been a major factor in the delays," says Headfirst's lead technical artist Andrew Brazier. "We've been spending a lot of time doing presentations and compiling builds of for companies when we should have been working on the game itself. However, we hope to have a publishing deal sewn up very soon."

*Call of Cthulhu* features a sanity system for your character of PI Jack Walters – the more monsters you encounter, the more insane you go and the more hallucinations you



CoC is more of a slow-burning freak 'em up than a straight shooter.

experience. These range from blurred vision and eerie whispers in your ear to seeing friends as enemies and, erm, pissing yourself with fright. Also any of the 11 injuries you sustain in the game require different treatment, such as tourniquets for a shot arm.

"There is currently no in-game interface on screen during gameplay," says Brazier, "but there is a separate 'healing screen' which shows an anatomical representation of Jack, meaning you can see where

and how he is injured and apply the necessary treatment. All of these will have an effect on your movement – needless to say Jack can't move as fast with his leg in a splint." We'll keep you posted on CoC – in the meantime, check out the gorgeous visuals and don't have nightmares...

- Publisher: TBA
- Developer: Headfirst
- ETA: TBA
- Website: www.callofcthlhu.co.uk

**TRUE OR FALSE**  
Ironically, Lovecraft's *Call of Cthulhu* has inspired many RPG and computer games, but he hated games. (answer below)

## THE MAN WHO KNOWS

**DEADLY TERRORIST** simulator *Counter-Strike* has claimed another tragic victim. In the latest violent episode to stun the gaming community, a 17-year-old was shot dead following a session of the popular multiplayer shooter at an Internet café in Vancouver. The incident was triggered when Christian Kwee began gloating about his prowess at the game, having beaten his prospective killers several times. Following another victory, the message "F.U." appeared on his monitor, to which he naturally replied "F.U.2." This led to an exchange of words, which escalated when three men rushed Kwee and grabbed him by the collar. Bystanders intervened and the incident seemed to have passed when the aggressors left the café. However, they returned seconds later, pushed Kwee into a corner and rained in punches to the head, face and upper torso. A single shot rang out and the killers fled, leaving the young gamer slumped dying on the floor. A Canadian police officer mused: "It seems that something from the imagination has been taken to the next level and made into reality."

Bang on cue, a group of violent youths in California have boasted that their life of crime was inspired by automotive cosh-'em-up *Grand Theft Auto*. The turf gang, known as 'Nut Case', is believed to be responsible for five recent homicides as well as dozens of armed robberies, eerily echoing the gameplay of the top-selling title. Following the arrest of four suspects, Oakland police department homicide investigator Sgt Mark Dunakin sneered: "It's not like they got the idea to do this off the video game. Maybe it desensitised them to what they were actually doing. It almost seemed like they were talking about their criminal actions as if they were playing a video game. The thing that's shocking, particularly at their young age, is how callous, calculating and kind of desensitised to it they were. Just nonchalant." There are no plans for a GTA Oakland add-on.

Meanwhile over in Norway Conservative MP Trond Helleland was discovered playing handheld space shooter *Metalion* during a debate on the Iraqi crisis. Labour MP Marit Nybakk screamed: "A member of parliament sitting and playing war games in the meeting hall when such serious questions as war and peace are being discussed puts us all in a bad light." Helleland mumbled: "I realise it was very stupid of me. I will not do it again." Puzzle Bobble it is then.

**"The message 'F.U.' appeared on his monitor, to which he naturally replied 'F.U.2.'"**

Answer: True. HP Lovecraft once said: "Games and sports ought not to be ranked among the major phenomena of life."



# LET'S GET PHYSICAL

PC GAMES HAVE TAKEN A FEW STEPS CLOSER TO REALITY WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED PHYSICS TECHNOLOGY. PAVEL BARTER RECKONS MATH NEVER SEEMED SO EXCITING

**IMAGINE A DYNAMIC** and interactive universe where bridges collapse, soldiers fall down stairs, articulated vehicles jack-knife, and a punch sends villains flailing backwards. Here brick walls collapse realistically, garments swish naturally and water ebbs as it should. Now stop imagining, because developers are already inserting new levels of realism into their games – and it's all thanks to a subject that you thought you'd heard the last of at school...

## THE BIG APPLE

Physics has become a priority for developers who are seeking to create whole new levels of illusion. Whenever characters and objects interact with each other in completely unscripted ways on screen, millions of calculations are performed every second in the depths of your PC, applying rules of reality to the game's world. At its core, a physics engine is a whole series of mathematical operations that are trying to recreate Newton's Laws. On the surface, physics technology rocks.

Epic's physics-based body falls in *Unreal Tournament 2003* have heralded the last rites for pre-canned death animations in first-person shooters. Digitalo's cyberpunk thriller *Devastation* and Ion Storm's *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War* have fully interactive environments where everything can be destroyed or manipulated, while

Sojourn's *Glymphse* will use physics to create zero-gravity space environments.

"You enter a room, see two zombies and shoot a rocket in between them," developer Adrian Chmielarz says of *Painkiller*, a hard-core shooter currently under construction. "The explosion impact throws one of them onto a wooden door. He breaks through and dies in the next room. The other zombie lands on a chandelier that crashes under his weight and hits the floor. It's not scripted, it just happens because of the physics engine. For a shooter it's a dream come true."

"The main ramification of physics technology is that players can do whatever they want in the game world," says *Black & White* creator Peter Molyneux. "For example, you could enter a bar, smash a bottle of beer and use it as a weapon."

This freedom means that emergent gameplay is becoming possible."

Physics has played a role in videogames for many years, but it was traditionally considered a mere *apéritif* to the main course of graphics. *Asteroids* (1979) employed simple momentum physics that allowed you to control your spaceship with thrusters. *Marble Madness* (1984) had lots of friction, collision detection and momentum effects. Dreamworks' *Trespasser* (1998) was ahead of its time, but suffered from a slight over-investment in physics: the hero's double-jointed arm and inability to hold his gun properly created an extremely wonky game world. But it was games such as Eidos' assassination fest *Hitman* (1999) – featuring rigid body stimulation and 'ragdoll' effects – that heralded the future.

Game middleware – other people's code that

developers integrate into their own programs – has come to the fore over the last couple of years, saving developers time and cost and reducing nasty glitches. Numerous physics specialists like MathEngine, whose *Karma* simulation has slotted into games such as the forthcoming first-person shooters *Postal 2* and *Devastation*, have sprouted quickly to meet demand.

"If a developer wants to quickly add extra features, we sometimes incorporate our physics into the game during development," says MathEngine's Paul Topping. "Other times we work with developers from the start. Some games use other middleware like *RenderWare* or *Unreal Technology* as well, in which case much of the physics work is already done," he says.

## RAGS TO RICHES

**PC ZONE**, hoping to snuggle a little closer to the world of physics, recently paid a visit to the white-coated boffins at Havok in Dublin. Founded late 1998 by one-time Commodore 64 developer Steven Collins, and Trinity College professor Hugh Reynolds, Havok is working for top-drawer studios like Ion Storm, Remedy and Valve. The team must remain schtum about the specific titles under development by the latter two, but bear in

## CAUSING HAVOK

PHYSICS TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION. NOTE: NO ZOMBIES WERE

HARMED DURING THE MAKING OF THIS DEMO.



Artists have not key-framed any movements of this zombie 'ragdoll', which is standing in an idle animation. In this state, if you lift his arm it will flop back down realistically.



The guns are broken out and the zombie is shot repeatedly with the same sized bullets but in slightly different places. No matter where the creature is hit, there's a different physical response.



"This character is made up of mathematical tissue, mass, joints and muscles. His reactions are determined purely by physical calculations," says Havok's Steven Collins.



A well-placed bullet lifts the brain-muncher from his feet. He goes flying back through the air as a real-life character would fall if hit by the same impact. It looks awesome.





Top: UT 2003 uses 'ragdoll' physics.  
Below: Havok in action.

mind that these developers created the superb *Max Payne* and *Half-Life* respectively.

"Developers are moving more to character-based physics," says Collins. "Havok will model the weight of a character's upper and lower arm, describe how the shoulder joints fit, then add collision points between all the body parts and the scenery. Then when you throw the character down the stairs, it will behave like a real human – a virtual stuntman!"

#### CRY HAVOK

Havok's bleeding-edge realism has wooed high profile developers like Ion Storm's Warren Spector, who says, "You don't often hear developers ooh-ing and aah-ing, but even we were blown away when they first got the Havok code running." (See p28 for our world exclusive hands-on preview of *Deus Ex 2*).

## "Characters fall down stairs like real humans – virtual stuntmen!"

STEVEN COLLINS  
FOUNDER MEMBER, HAVOK

Most developers agree that physics can make a real difference to player immersion. Volition, famed for its 'Geo-Mod' technology in *Red Faction* that allows you to destroy large chunks of scenery, is using physics to correct gameplay elements in the new sequel. "We tightened up our vehicle physics and eliminated some of the more unstable looking movement that plagued some of the vehicles in the original game," says James Tsai, associate producer at Volition. "For *Red Faction 2*, we're able to make guys slam against



Battlecruiser Generations: Space physics.

walls, get thrust over ledges, and fly and slump far more realistically this time."

Lionhead's Peter Molyneux has also made physics a priority in the development of *Black & White 2*. "At the moment we are applying physics into the spell system. The ability to melt, freeze and smash must all work correctly, and as a result the game will look spectacular. We've conducted a lot of work on the physics of water and the results are looking amazing," he says.

Havok's Steven Collins is quick to point out that developers must

sometimes curb the nature of physics, moulding real-world action and reaction in order to create an experience. On other occasions, disregarding physics altogether is the best design choice – for example, a sniping model where the player has to account for wind speed and the effect of gravity on the bullet might be realistic, but it's not much fun. "At the end of the day, you can only get as close as needed to suspend belief and leave it at that," says developer Derek Smart, working on *Battlecruiser Generations* for DreamCatcher Games.

The ultimate goal of middleware physics companies like Havok is to help create fully immersive worlds where characters and objects have weight and mass. Physics, AI, graphics and script will combine to create filmic experiences, allowing developers to direct games like their Hollywood counterparts. "It's our job to deliver this dream of physics," adds Collins, "and then it's up to the developers to harness it." [E]



Steven Collins, Havok: Physics master.

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# EMULATION

**OUR REGULAR RETRO REANIMATOR STUART CAMPBELL BRINGS YOU THE BEST TEN EMULATIONS FROM THE YEAR PC ZONE WAS BORN**

## IN THE HUNT (IREM, ARCADE/SATURN/PLAYSTATION/PC)

Glancing casually at the screenshot on the right, you're probably already thinking "Hmmpf, it just looks like a lazy ripoff of popular Neo Geo platform and shooting series *Metal Slug*." But that's why Emulation Zone is writing this column and you're not, because Emulation Zone knows that Irem's submarine-bound shoot 'em up was released in 1993, a full three years before the soon-to-be-seminal Neo game. But it's not just for being first to copy *Metal Slug*'s distinctive graphic style that *In The Hunt* deserves to be remembered, because it's a fantastic game in its own right. Side-scrolling shooters were pretty out of fashion by 1993, but *ITH* (playing a lot like a cross between the aforementioned *Slug* and Irem's own *R-Type*) is a timeless classic. From the first few seconds it's an all-out carnival of carnage, the stirring music all but drowned out by the cataclysmic explosion of pretty much everything on the screen. But it's a beautifully balanced game, which for a change makes you work for every inch of progress, rather than filling levels with cannon fodder as a prelude to a ludicrously overpowered boss. There isn't room here for even a swift guided tour of the highlights, so just load it up and enjoy some of the most inventive arcade action there would be for at least the next three years.



**In One Hunt: the most exciting submarine game ever.**

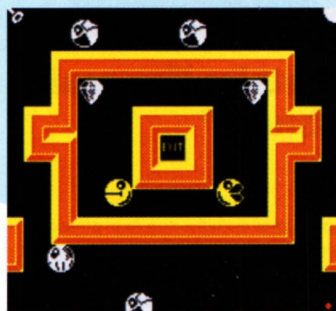


**This is no time to play Duck Hunt.**

## CANNON FODDER (SENSIBLE SOFTWARE, AMIGA/ATARI ST/PC/MEGA DRIVE/SNES)

And speaking of cannon fodder, no 1993 reminiscing would be complete without giving pride of place to Sensible's epic arcade wargame, the game that gave birth to the entire RTS genre. So many things about *Cannon Fodder* were noteworthy, not least the game's almost unique moral undercurrent (all your soldiers had names, and their gravestones mounted up poignantly on a green hill as you sent them Douglas Haig-like to their deaths), which was ironically misunderstood by the tabloid press and the British Royal Legion in a media storm that saw the game's distinctive "poppy" cover artwork (and that of magazines featuring the game) pulled at the last minute under the threat of legal action. But no amount of hysterical tabloid guff could detract from *Cannon Fodder*'s groundbreaking, addictive-as-crack gameplay, and the game stormed to the top of the

charts and stayed there for years. Indeed, *Cannon Fodder* and its even-better sequel still sell decent numbers of copies today on a PC budget label, almost a decade after their original release. How many games can actually say that?



**Pac-Man was popular at the videogame zoo.**

## I, BALL 2 (FIREBIRD, SPECTRUM)

And speaking of things that lived a long time, Sinclair's legendary ZX Spectrum computer was still staggering on in 1993, nine years after its debut on the home computer market. Even at this late stage in the machine's life, there was still room for new original software, and *I, Ball 2* – released on the Firebird label and sold at a breathtaking £1.99 – was as good as it got. Programmed by Timothy Closs, who went on to create the superb *Kid Gloves* for the 16-bit home computers then sadly disappeared from trace forever, *I, B2* was a gloriously imaginative action puzzle game spread across dozens of single screens, which your intrepid reporter has still never quite managed to get to the end of.



**The Chaos Engine: cool Bitmap action.**

## THE CHAOS ENGINE (RENEGADE, AMIGA/ATARI ST/PC)

And speaking of intrepid adventurers foiled by arcade puzzle action, that brings us neatly to *The Chaos Engine*, one of the truly great games made by star programmers The Bitmap Brothers (that wasn't *Speedball 2*). A sprawling adventure in the briefly-popular 'steampunk' genre, some derided it as basically *Gauntlet* with knobs on, but that

## EMULATION EXPLAINED

Your PC is more powerful than any other games platform in the world. The proof comes from the fact that top-end PCs can play games that were programmed to run on other systems. All you need is the actual emu software (MAME is one of the most famous), which we run links to every month and the actual game ROM. Load the ROM into the emulator and you can play the game in its original form. There are legal issues though, unless you own the original game it's against the law to download a ROM. For that reason we can't link to ROMs. Emu Zone is simply here to point out the wonderful things your PC can do, not to encourage you to break the law. Honest.



# ZONE

## The Ten Best Emulations of 1993

PCZONE  
(10<sup>th</sup>)  
Birthday  
ISSUE

did it a terrific disservice to the level of strategy in the game. Indeed, with the diverse group of heroes you selected your two-man team from for each game, it was probably more akin to a 2D version of *Daikatana* – only 50 times better.



A nice slow start to *Gunstar Heroes*.

### GUNSTAR HEROES (TREASURE, MEGA DRIVE)

And speaking of heroes (stay tuned to see if Emu Zone can keep this straining motif up until the end of the feature), they don't come much more heroic in the videogame-coding world than Treasure, the secretive Japanese codehouse that brought us legendary classics such as *Bangai-o* and *Radiant Silvergun*. *Gunstar Heroes* was the game that first made their name, though – an extraordinary platforming shoot 'em up bursting at the seams with fresh ideas and sheer gung-ho *joie de vivre*. Like a glorious rollercoaster ride straight through the middle of the world's biggest live fireworks show – only more exciting.

### SAMURAI SHODOWN (SNK, NEO GEO)

And speaking of, um, Japanese things, you don't get much more Japanese than a samurai. (*He's never going to make it – Ed.*) The Neo Geo was a machine



Duran Duran in a mighty showdown.

absolutely awash in fighting games, which makes it all the more impressive feat for *Samurai Shodown* to stand as head and shoulders above the rest as it does. One of the first ever beat 'em ups to star characters armed with weapons rather than just their fists (and science-baffling fireball power, of course), *Shodown* is the spiritual predecessor to *Soul Calibur*, and shares that game's instant-play accessibility combined with an endless well of tactical depth to discover. Plus one of the characters has a dog sidekick, which he probably sneaked in to the fight in secret.



RPGs: predictable architecture.

### SECRET OF MANA (SQUARESOFT, SNES)

And speaking of secrets (Look! A decoy!), there was a great big one at the heart of this legendary SNES RPG, which many aficionados of the genre still rate above the SNES incarnation of *Zelda*. The game's groundbreaking feature was the facility to offer three-player simultaneous adventuring, but even beyond that gimmick it's a superb piece of design that offers around 70 hours of intense questing without having to pad it out with endless non-interactive FMV cut-scenes, unlike a certain other Square RPG series that we could mention.



No, not the new Sinéad O'Connor vid.

### CYBERMORPH (ATARI, JAGUAR)

And speaking of *Final Fantasy*, surely the (cough) final fantasy of the once-great Atari Corporation was their belief in the Jaguar console. Released in the 'dead zone' between the end of the 16-bit consoles and the launch of the PlayStation and Saturn, the Jag was a powerful machine almost completely bereft of quality software, and ironically one of the few great titles it ever saw was given away free with the machine. *Cybermorph* was an eerie, otherworldly space opera not dissimilar to a 'grown-up' version of SNES hit *Starfox* (also released in 1993) but was tragically lost to posterity in the general incompetence of Atari's marketing department.

### THUNDERHAWK (CORE, MEGA CD)

And speaking of sadly-wasted technological breakthroughs, one of the biggest selling points of Sega's ill-fated Mega Drive add-on the Mega CD was its ability to create rotating 3D graphics in



"South of the river? No chance mate."

the style of the SNES's famous 'Mode 7'. Unfortunately, only one game ever made any real use of the feature before the machine completed its swallow-dive down the toilet of console history. Core's lovely helicopter blaster – like a first-person version of *Desert Strike* – deserved a much better fate.



Elvis returns in videogame form.

### YO! JOE! (HUDSON SOFT, AMIGA)

And speaking of fantastic games that only four people ever actually played, Japanese developers Hudson Soft (creators of *Bomberman*, among many others) spent 1993 in an ill-advised attempt to focus away from consoles and develop games for home computers, which was as financially disastrous as it was creatively excellent. *Yo! Joe!* is the juiciest fruit from the era, a vast and endlessly entertaining and inventive platform romp (best bit – lobbing Molotov cocktails at enemies and setting their trousers on fire) that was eternally destined to be sneered at by idiot computer nerds and never offered to its natural console-owning audience, who would have loved it like their own child. 1993, eh?

**"Shodown is the spiritual predecessor to *Soul Calibur*, and shares its instant-play accessibility"**

### EMULATE 1993 WITH:

- In The Hunt – MAME, [www.mame.net](http://www.mame.net)
- Cannon Fodder, Yo! Joe!, The Chaos Engine – WinUAE – [www.winuae.net](http://www.winuae.net)
- I, Ball 2 – Spectaculator – [www.spectaculator.com](http://www.spectaculator.com)
- Gunstar Heroes, Thunderhawk – Gens – [gens.consolemul.com](http://gens.consolemul.com)
- Samurai Shodown – NeoRageX or MAME – [www.neoragex.com](http://www.neoragex.com)
- Secret Of Mana – ZSNES – [www.zsnes.com](http://www.zsnes.com)
- Cybermorph – Project Tempest – [pt.emuunlim.com](http://pt.emuunlim.com)



# Battlefield Earth!



THE LASER SQUAD PHENOMENON RUMBLES ON! A 3D SINGLE-PLAYER VERSION IS COMING YOUR WAY

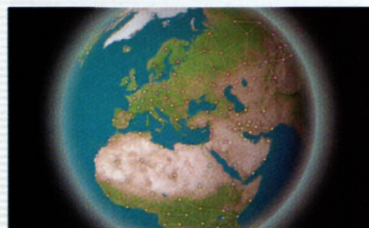
**WITH THEIR SLICK** mixture of R&B and pop, East London's *Laser Squad* has taken the charts by storm with their catchy debut *Crossroads*... Sorry? What's that? Blazing who? Oh, right. Seems we're actually talking about the new version of *Laser Squad Nemesis*, the tactical action game from the makers of *X-COM*.

In any case, it's time to get excited, laser buffs, as our favourite small-scale tactical warfare game is about

to go global with *Laser Squad Nemesis: Earth*. We knew a full single-player retail version was on the way, but what we didn't know was how gorgeous it would look, eschewing the flat isometrics of the subscription-based version for fully deformable 3D terrain. "It's a brand new engine that adds to both the gameplay and the visual appeal of the game," says Julian Gollop, chief designer of *LSN*. "The environment will be 3D, with hills, valleys,

rivers and multiple storey buildings. Explosions will make craters in the ground and cause buildings to collapse. *LSN: Earth* also adds a strategic dimension to the game with a strategic interface similar to the original *X-Com* games." Bring. It. On.

**Publisher:** TBA **Developer:** Codo Technologies  
**ETA:** Q3 2003 **Website:** [www.lasersquadnemesis.com](http://www.lasersquadnemesis.com)



A global strategic map has been added.



Fight, fight, fight!



Missions will include sabotage, kidnapping, freeing hostages and defending.



A massively multiplayer version is coming.



A handy guide to backpacking in Europe.

## Good Cop. Bad Cop

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF  
A MONTH ON PC ZONE

### GOOD COP



**PC ZONE's 10th birthday.**  
Hooray to us.

**World exclusive playtest**  
of the stunning *Deus Ex 2*.

**PC ZONE** members old and new uniting  
for the biggest Supertest of all time.

**Rhianna and her amazing gumball feat.**  
At last count she had 35 in her mouth,  
becoming the "Linda Lovelace of  
confectionary."

### BAD COP

**Dave eating a calf's tongue.**  
**Cold. The sick bastard.**

**Singlepoint** for messing  
up Jamie's new mobile phone.

**The greasy spoon that served nuts**  
to Jamie, causing him to have an  
allergic reaction which nearly made  
his head explode.

**Australia beating England 3-1 in the**  
football and the rest of us having to  
listen to Aussie Anthony go on about it.

Good Cop: **Lacey** Bad Cop: **Cagney**  
(from *Cagney and Lacey* - sent in by Mr T Dermot,  
East London)  
Send in your suggestions for next month's Good Cop  
and Bad Cop to win a PC Zone goodie bag.



## ORC SCRATCHINGS

PHENOMIC'S *SPELLFORCE* LOOKS MAGIC. NEW SCREENSHOTS!

**WIZARD NEW INFO** and screenshots have emerged on the German-made role-playing game/real-time strategy hybrid *SpellForce: The Order of Dawn*. Set in a fantasy world that has descended into chaos due to the machinations of an evil cabal of thirteen dark mages, the lead designer of *SpellForce*, Volker Wertich says that "the main part is an RTS game, but the RPG elements will certainly keep the player captivated. Having an avatar you can freely choose, such as a warrior or black magician, gives you a much better opportunity to become more involved in the game and storyline rather than just commanding nameless and faceless armies."

You can build up your own settlements, and in battle you have powerful weapons and magic spells to obliterate over 30 different races, including the staple RPG diet of goblins, dragons and orcs. "We've also developed a revolutionary system called Click and Fight," continues Wertich. "A click on an enemy and all possible actions are displayed under the portraits of your available units. A second click completes an attack - it's quick and precise." We'll check this out in a hands-on preview soon.

**Publisher:** JoWood **Developer:** Phenomic Games  
**ETA:** Q3 2003 **Website:** [www.spellforce.de](http://www.spellforce.de)



God was very angry.



An atmospheric night battle.



*SpellForce's* 3D engine lets you zoom in from an isometric view to first-person.



# Do you fancy a wriggle?

WE TALK EXCLUSIVELY TO DEVELOPER TEAM 17 ABOUT ITS BIG PLANS FOR WORMS 3

**ANNOUNCING THAT** you're about to take an established and universally acclaimed series from 2D to 3D is often the death knell for any game. Remember what happened to *Lemmings*? However, legendary development company Team 17 believes its attempts to take the *Worms* series into 3D will break with tradition and prove to be as successful and popular as the first two games. Development director Martyn Brown explains.

"We've had to approach the technology from a new and fairly determined angle since it was absolutely key in our eyes that we had to have a fully free-form destructible 3D environment to enable us to

deliver the game mechanics that *Worms* players demand."

But will this over-reliance on a 3D world mean Team 17 will be scrimping on the wacky, zany features which typify the series and a give it its unique humour? Apparently not, according to Brown: "In terms of cool features, there are plenty, and we're all particularly dazzled by the fabulous new air strikes and steerable 3D super-sheep!"

We'll let you know just what we think as soon as we get our hands on code.

■ **Publisher:** Activision  
 ■ **Developer:** Team 17  
 ■ **ETA:** Q4 2003  
 ■ **Website:** [www.worms3.com](http://www.worms3.com)



It's still turn-based...



...but in glorious sun-drenched 3D



With the random terrain generator no two games are alike.

**"We had to have a fully free-form destructible 3D environment to deliver the game mechanics that *Worms* players demand"**

## CHASING THE DRAGON

THQ SIGNS REVOLUTION'S *BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON*

**GAMES PUBLISHING** behemoth THQ will publish the third instalment in the *Broken Sword* adventure series, *The Sleeping Dragon*, in October this year. "It was THQ's commitment to making *BS: TSD* a success, coupled with the team's enthusiasm that convinced us to sign," says managing director of Revolution, Charles Cecil.

*The Sleeping Dragon* is moving from point-and-click to a control system based on keyboard control of the characters in a 3D environment, and will see the return of heroes George and Nico from the previous games as they embark on a world-wide trek to save mankind from a global catastrophe.

So, how has the game progressed since our exclusive preview in the December issue? "The story and design are finished, and the engine tools are nearly complete," says Cecil. "Artists are moving onto new sections – the Congo is the latest area to come to life, and we're really pleased with the results. It's tremendously exciting – we're confident we have the team and the vision for something very special."

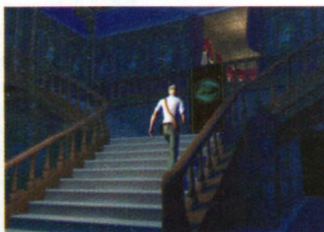
■ **Publisher:** THQ  
 ■ **Developer:** Revolution  
 ■ **ETA:** October 10  
 ■ **Website:** [www.brokensword3.com](http://www.brokensword3.com)



The new screens of the Congo level are classic pulp adventure stuff.



"I think she's a write-off mate."



George in *Resi Evil* tribute shock.



**"Floating point framebuffers and complex fragment shaders will also allow much better volumetric effects, like volumetric illumination of fogged areas with shadows and additive/subtractive eddy currents."**

id Software's John Carmack talks about the latest PC graphics cards and makes us feel very stupid

**"We're trying out 'Never pet a burning dog' right now, but we're still considering some more traditional alternatives."**

Michael V Capps, CEO of Epic's new label Scion revealing his intriguing company philosophy

**"Scrapland is being designed with argument and action in equal shares... On ashes of ancient civilizations, robots have built in Scrapland a city of vertiginous heights."**

Extracts from the eloquent press release for forthcoming Mercury/Steam game, Scrapland



# CHARTS

In association with **VIRGIN MEGASTORES**

Your one-stop guide to game releases past, present and future. Whether a game is lost, looming or selling like sim-cakes, this is where you'll find it





There must be thousands of wannabe town planners out there, with *SimCity 4* going straight to number one. It's unbelievably addictive and has sumptuous graphics that immerse you completely in your make-believe settlement.



You can't ignore it. *SimCity 4* and the mighty *Sim* franchise now takes up half of the PC games top ten. However, after four months at the top, *The Sims: Unleashed* has dropped to number three while *The Sims: Deluxe Edition* stays in at second place.

	TITLE	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1 NEW	<b>SIM CITY 4</b>	EA	80%
2 -	THE SIMS: DELUXE EDITION	EA	N/A
3 ▼	THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	EA	78%
4 ▼	MEDAL OF HONOR: AA - SPEARHEAD	EA	82%
5 ▼	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	MICROSOFT	90%
6 ▼	THE SIMS: ON HOLIDAY	EA	66%
7 -	MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT	EA	94%
8 -	THE SIMS: HOT DATE	EA	71%
9 ▲	MAFIA	TAKE 2	92%
10 ▼	WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS	VU GAMES	85%



*Age Of Mythology* has dropped a place, but Ensemble's ultimate god game is still a powerful presence at number five. Build up your mythical empire while avoiding the attention of several vengeful Greek, Norse and Egyptian gods.



"You f\*\*\*\*in' mooks!" Gangland shootings galore at number nine with *Mafia*. This third-person *GTAAIII*-style game has been riddling the PC with Tommy Gun fire since its launch, providing gamers with an entertaining and violent picture of the US in the '20s.

## YOUR SHOUT

Have your say at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk)

Wow, that's a lot of Simming. If only people paid attention to their family and their surroundings in real life, then we'd be living in the utopia that Will Wright can now afford.  
**Dandy Flugle**

It's surprising to see *Battlefield 1942* has gone out of the charts, although when *Road To Rome* comes out the sales may go up. It doesn't reflect the view of most gamers. Can't they just give *The Sims* one chart place?  
**Smithersthegod**

I think the *Sims Online* will make the top 10, and with *C&C Generals*' release, I think EA is in a position of taking up each place in the top 10. Surely it's a record for the amount of games charting from the same publisher?  
**deadmartyr**



## TOP 10

1	SIM CITY 4	EA
2	THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	EA
3	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	MICROSOFT
4	MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR	ACTIVISION
5	MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT	EA
6	JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	EA
7	HARRY POTTER: COS	EA
8	FIFA 2003	EA
9	THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TFOTR	BLACK LABEL
10	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2	INFOGRAMES

## COMPETITION



## Win the entire Virgin Top 10!

Once again, **PC ZONE** and **Virgin** have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Virgin Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer the following simple question.

**QUESTION:** Which Chicago mafia boss was behind the 1929 St Valentine's Day Massacre?

**Answers on a postcard to:** PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ04A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: April 3, 2003

- Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, email address, job title and company name (and age if under 18).
- Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.
- Please indicate whether you are a current subscriber to **PC ZONE**.

**Terms and conditions:** Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



# INCOMING!

PC ZONE'S RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. ALL APPROXIMATE MONTHLY DATES ARE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

## MARCH

BLITZKRIEG	CDV
DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN	TAKE 2
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4	EIDOS
DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN	NOVALOGIC
DEVASTATION	HD INTERACTIVE
ECHOLON: WIND WARRIORS	OXYGEN
G.I. COMBAT	MINDSCAPE
GOthic II	JOWOOD
IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE	CODEMASTERS
INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB	ACTIVISION
IRU: TALES FROM THE EDGE OF THE WORLD	MICROIDS
JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS	VIVENDI
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE	KONAMI
O.R.B.	MINDSCAPE
POST MORTEM	MICROIDS
RAINBOW SIX: RAVEN SHIELD	UBI SOFT
RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC	UBI SOFT
RISE OF NATIONS	MICROSOFT
STRIKE FIGHTER	JUST FLIGHT
TOCA RACE DRIVER	CODEMASTERS
THE GREAT ESCAPE	SCI
VIETCONG	TAKE 2
WARRIOR KINGS - BATTLES	EMPIRE
WILL ROCK	UBI SOFT

## APRIL

APOCALYPTICA	KONAMI
AQUANOX 2: REVELATION	JOWOOD
FREELANCER	MICROSOFT
REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION	EIDOS
TROPICO 2: PIRATE COVE	TAKE 2
VIKINGS: TOTAL WAR	ACTIVISION

## MAY

CHASER	JOWOOD
HARBINGER	DREAMCATCHER
ISS 3	KONAMI
LOTUS CHALLENGE	XICAT
SÖLDNER - SECRET WARS	JOWOOD
STALKER: OBLIVION LOST	CDV
STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II	ACTIVISION
TRON 2.0	DISNEY
X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	ACTIVISION

## JUNE

STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II	ACTIVISION
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## TBA

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER	TAKE 2
EARTH AND BEYOND	EA
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	TAKE 2
HALF-LIFE 2	VU GAMES
HALO	MICROSOFT
MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER	EA
MAX PAYNE 2	TAKE 2
QUAKE IV	ACTIVISION

# MISSING IN ACTION

The war's not over until the last game comes home...

## THE SIMS ONLINE

**WOULD YOU** believe it. After reviewing the game last issue with code fresh from the US launch, Electronic Arts has announced that *The Sims Online* has been delayed until September in the UK. An excuse was unavailable at the time of going to press.

■ Publisher: EA  
 ■ Developer: Maxis  
 ■ ETA: September  
 ■ Website: [www.thesimsonline.com](http://www.thesimsonline.com)



## WOLFENSTEIN: TERRITORY

**KILLED IN ACTION**



**LOOKS LIKE** the single-player side of the game failed to line-up to id's mighty expectations. It's been canned, but Splash Damage's masterful multiplayer mode will now be available as a free download. Yay!

■ Publisher: id  
 ■ Developer: Mad Doc Software  
 ■ ETA: KIA  
 ■ Website: [www.idsoftware.com](http://www.idsoftware.com)

## CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

**THE ULTIMATE** football manager sim has unfortunately been relegated to a late March launch. However, despite the delay, fans of the addictive stats-heavy title will hopefully be in for a cup-winning performance - read our review next month to find out.

■ Publisher: Eidos  
 ■ Developer: Sports Interactive  
 ■ ETA: March  
 ■ Website: [www.sigames.com](http://www.sigames.com)



## US TOP 10

1	SIM CITY 4	EA
2	THE SIMS: DELUXE EDITION	EA
3	THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	EA
4	ZOO TYCOON	MICROSOFT
5	WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS	VU GAMES
6	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	MICROSOFT
7	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2	INFOGRAMES
8	AGE OF EMPIRES 2: AGE OF KINGS	MICROSOFT
9	HARRY POTTER: COS	EA
10	BATTLEFIELD 1942	EA





TOP STORY | NEWS | EMULATION ZONE | THE MAN WHO KNOWS | CHARTS | HOTSHOTS







# DOOM III

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS WORLD EXCLUSIVE SHOT FROM THE BIGGEST GAME OF 2003

**OUR BIRTHDAY JUST** got even better, thanks to our good friends at id who have kindly sent us this incredible world-exclusive *Doom III* shot. As you'll see the chainsaw is making a reappearance, although it can get a bit messy if it falls into the wrong hands, as this rather gruesome ensemble shows. It's hard not to feel a modicum of concern for a couple of the zombies, with some of them appearing to be sporting rather nasty

flesh wounds. Especially the one on the floor. With no head. I'd get a plaster on that sharpish mate, before it goes septic. We haven't seen code running for a few months but rest assured that id won't release a game it's not confident with. The fact that it has just canned *Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory* for not being up to scratch is proof of this.

If you're a *PC ZONE* subscriber then you'll already own a special limited edition

art print of this very image, as a token of our appreciation for your undying support. If you're not already a subscriber, but you'd like to get hold of one of these stunning gifts for yourself, don't despair. Turn to page 151 for details.

■ **Publisher:** Activision  
■ **Developer:** id Software  
■ **ETA:** When it's finished  
■ **Website:** [www.idsoftware.com](http://www.idsoftware.com)





# ENTER THE MATRIX

ALL NEW SCREENSHOTS FROM THE SMASH HIT MOVIE SPIN OFF,  
*ENTER THE MATRIX*



**BACK IN ISSUE** 124, we brought you the world exclusive first look preview of *Enter The Matrix*. While we were mightily impressed with what we'd seen and heard, we have to admit that some of the screenshots we were given were a touch on the grainy side. Fear not though, as these were in fact cross-platform, work in progress shots, which were the only ones available at the time.

But we've now got our hands on some glorious new pics for you to feast your eyes on. Just check out these beautiful new hi-resolution visuals which look set to complement the stunning gameplay that is being promised by veteran developer Shiny. If you fancy seeing some more of what's on offer, head to the recently launched official *Enter The Matrix* website, [www.enterthematrixgame.com](http://www.enterthematrixgame.com). This is where you'll find a host of action shots of the lead characters (Niobe and Ghost) beating the eyeballs out of various opponents, as well as some nice close-ups of our heroes. And make sure you visit regularly as we've been reliably informed that frequent updates are pending.

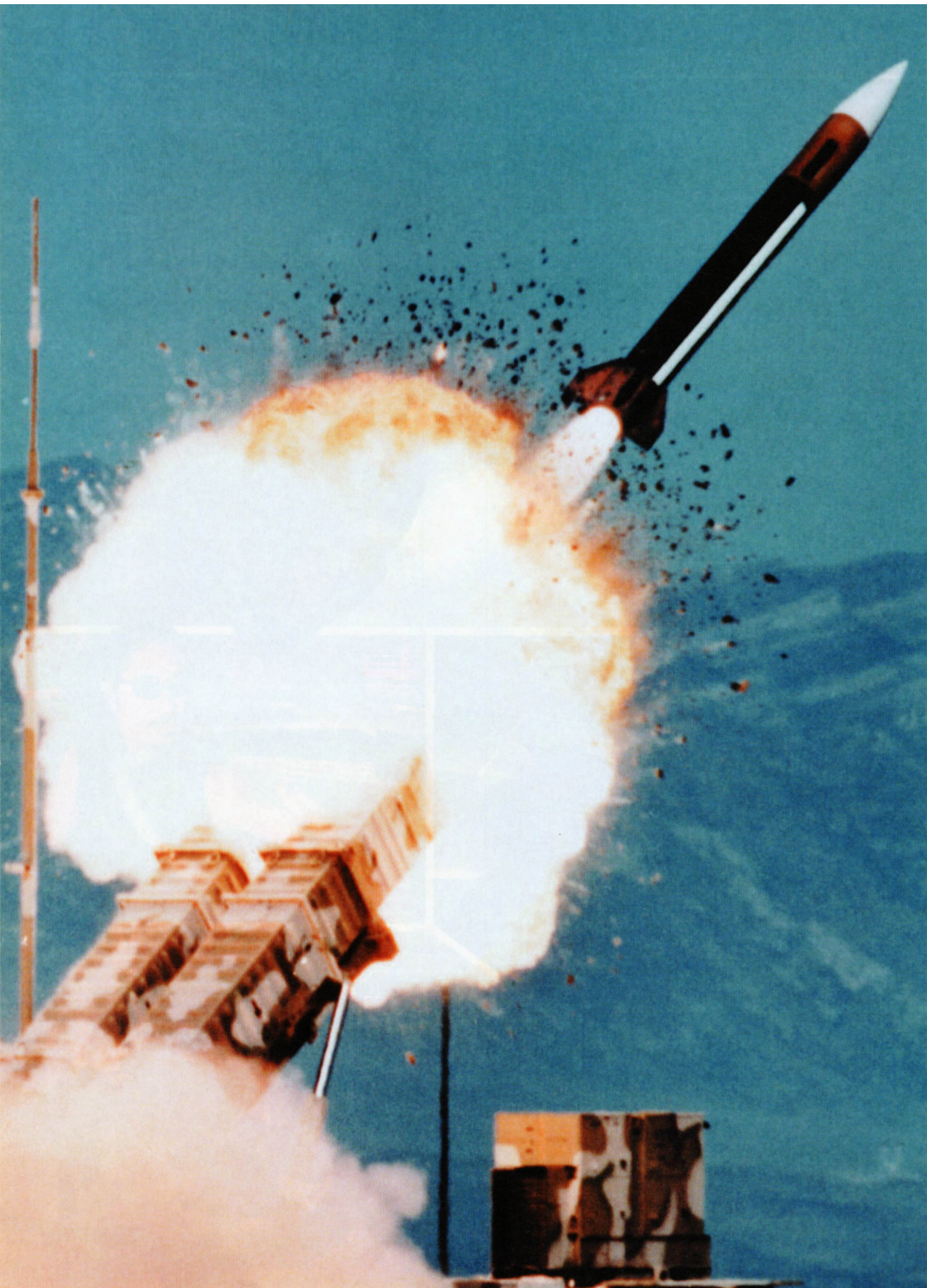
■ **Publisher:** Infogrames  
■ **Developer:** Shiny  
■ **ETA:** May 15  
■ **Website:** [www.enterthematrixgame.com](http://www.enterthematrixgame.com)













#### You Call the Shots

Put your finger on the pulse of modern warfare. Enter a world teetering on Armageddon and use inspired strategic expertise to take control. Select a battle plan and the personnel to execute it, deploy your resources and annihilate the enemy.

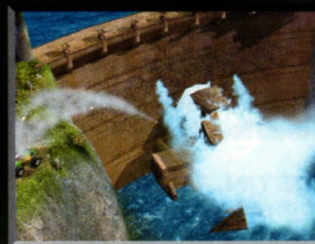


#### Three Ways to Dominate

Command one of three diverse warring factions inspired by real-world ideologies: the hi-tech USA, swarming Chinese war machine or the resourceful Global Liberation Army (GLA). Control their customizable arsenals both on land and in the skies in mission after mission of intense battle action.

#### State-of-the-art SAGE Engine

Experience Command & Conquer in unprecedented detail as you battle it out in full 3D on urban cityscapes, rugged deserts and frozen wastelands. Real-time strategy never looked so sharp.



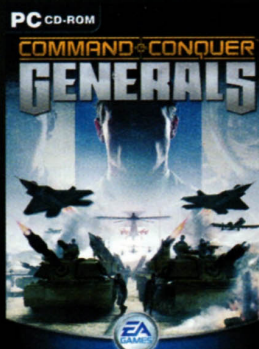
WHOEVER SAID

'THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD'  
DIDN'T HAVE ONE OF THESE TO PLAY WITH.

The year is 2020. Global conflict beckons. Who will emerge and take control? Someone with a keen strategic mind and exceptional leadership skills. Someone as at home in the war room as he is on the front line. Someone with ice water in his veins. Fit the bill? Sign up for Command & Conquer Generals.

COMMAND & CONQUER  
**GENERALS**

[generals.ea.com](http://generals.ea.com)



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[uk.ea.com](http://uk.ea.com)



Future perfect...

# DEUS EX 2 INVISIBLE WAR

**PC Zone travelled to Austin, Texas to meet the Ion Storm, the team working on the sequel to one of the best games ever made. Jamie Sefton was the only journalist allowed to play Warren Spector's latest conspiracy-laden masterpiece. You don't get luckier**

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Ion Storm  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos  
**WEBSITE** [www.deusex2.com](http://www.deusex2.com)  
**ETA** Q3 2002

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- New bio-mod system for enhanced character development
- Multi-branching sci-fi storyline with four endings
- Astonishing dynamic lighting and Havok physics
- Unscripted puzzle-solving and AI
- You can fight JC Denton from the first game!



**AUSTIN, TEXAS** in the US of A. It's early February, but the dry heat of the midday sun is already scorching the wide, immaculately swept streets in their strict mathematical grids – the town planners here had the luxury of having hundreds of square miles of desert to play with. Just north of the Lone Star State's gleaming capital lies Dallas, which on November 22, 1963, became the notorious setting for the assassination of president John F Kennedy.

When we mentioned that one of the world's most famous conspiracies supposedly took place only 180 miles away to the creator of the conspiracy-filled first-person shooter/RPG hybrid *Deus Ex*, he completely pulled the rug on us. "The amusing thing is I don't believe in any of that stuff. Ask anyone. I believe – and I'm not kidding here – that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing JFK. I absolutely do not believe in conspiracies."

PC Zone is here at Ion Storm Austin with studio director Warren Spector to playtest the latest build of one of the most eagerly-awaited sequels in videogame

CV



## ION STORM

Ion Storm was originally set up in 1998 by John Romero, Tom Hall and Warren Spector, working in studios located in Dallas and Austin, USA. Following the *Daikatana* debacle, only the Austin studio remains, with Warren Spector at the helm. Currently in development are *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War* and *Thief III*.

**1998** *Dominion: Storm Over Gift 3* becomes the studio's first release, but the isometric strategy title receives a lukewarm reception from gamers.

**2000** Ion Storm's time-travelling FPS *Daikatana* was delayed for so long, it became an industry joke. Jon Romero's first project since he left id wasn't terrible, but it wasn't good enough to justify the hype, or the very long wait.

**2000** The sci-fi conspiracy-stuffed *Deus Ex* from Warren 'System Shock' Spector was a critical hit when launched, delivering a fabulous mix of first-person shooting, exploration and role-playing.

**2001** *Anachronox* was Tom Hall's 3D role-playing game that didn't look great, but had a decent storyline and excellent *Final Fantasy*-style combat.

history – *Deus Ex 2:*

*Invisible War*. The development team, which also includes producer Bill Money and project director Harvey Smith, is understandably excited about showing off the new game, which has only very recently come together in playable form. "The best thing about getting to do a second game like this is you get to look back at the first game and think about what we got right, and what we got wrong so you can address it," says Spector. "A lot of people say that a second game stifles creativity – I simply don't buy that."

## NEW BEGINNINGS

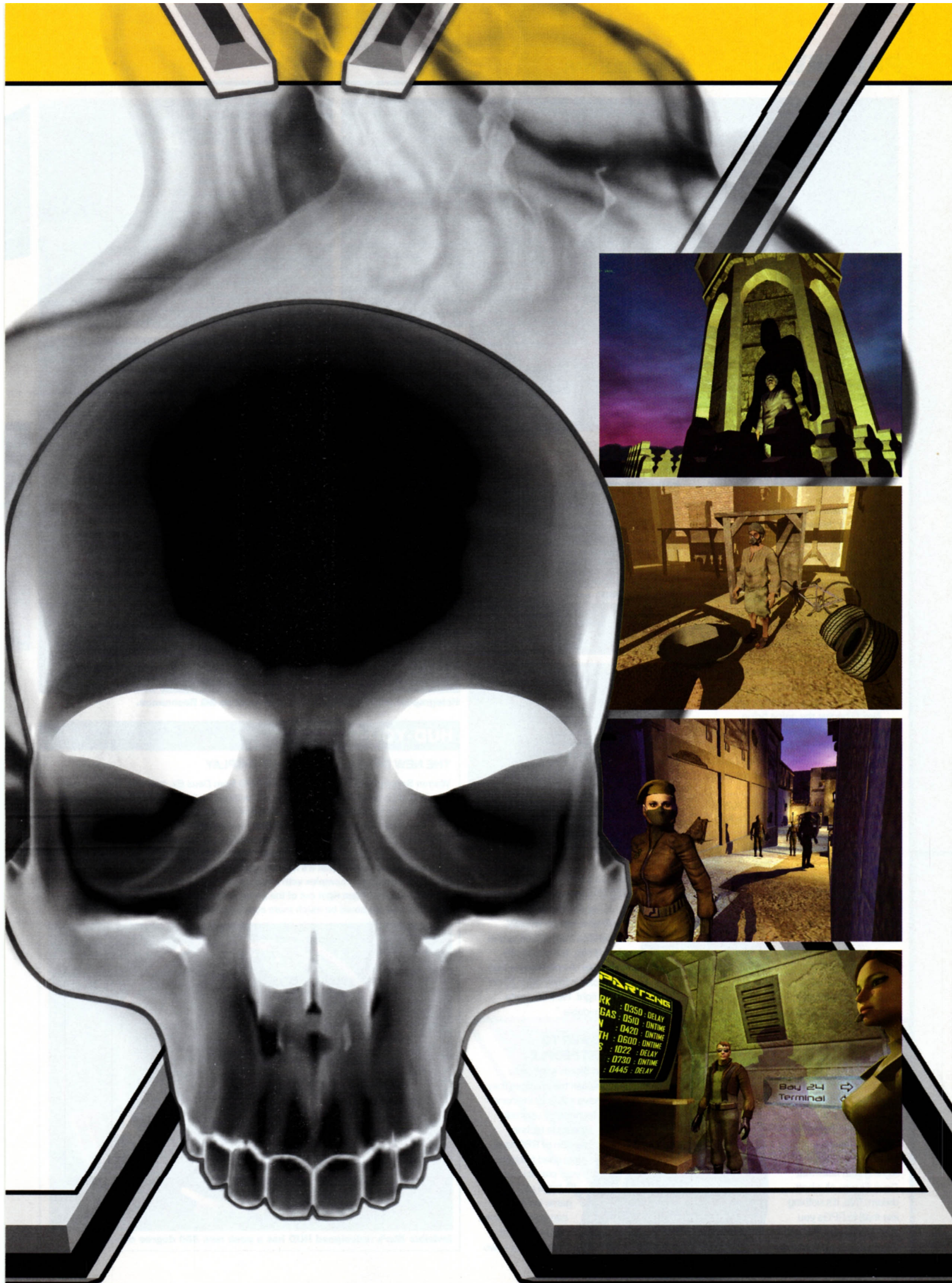
*Invisible War* begins with a disturbing intro FMV that was shown to us in an early 'animatic' form – basically a rough cut to give an impression of the finished product.

As atmospheric electronic music kicks in, the camera zooms into a scene in downtown Chicago where a figure is desperately evading the attentions of several futuristic helicopters and troopers. The action moves deep within the headquarters of the powerful TARSUS group, where two figures are discussing the appearance of a terrorist who may be targeting their organisation.

Cut back to the streets where a hooded figure steps out into traffic and takes out a Nanite Detonator. Robots try to tackle the terrorist, but he snaps the purple vial releasing a wave of energy that begins to spread out, disintegrating everything around it. People run away, screaming briefly before they are destroyed in a millisecond, as the two figures from TARSUS manage to escape from the destruction of the city in a waiting helicopter. "We aren't equipped to fight a war!" says the woman. "We're going to change the terms of engagement," replies the man. "We don't need cities or armies. We have the cells of human bodies. An invisible weapon for an invisible war."











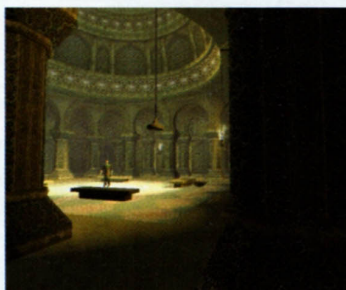
The new elite Illuminati Commando.

Set 15 years after the original *Deus Ex*, *Invisible War* delivers a dark, dystopian world in which nano-technology is widespread, and a catastrophic worldwide economic crash has left various socio-political factions fighting for power. You play as Alex D, a next-generation clone of JC Denton, and have the choice of being male or female. Apart from having repercussions on how the game plays, this has also meant a massive amount of work for Ion Storm to implement thousands of voice lines for each gender – as well as options for skin tone, hair and clothing.

Alex D begins the game being sheltered by TARSUS, and after escaping from the destruction of Chicago, makes for a Seattle facility where he/she meets other augmented humans from the same experimental program.

When asked about which of *Deus Ex*'s original three endings *Invisible War* has picked up from, Spector insisted that the team keep schtum. "One of the things we did on the first game was that we didn't talk about the story much at all," explains Spector. "*Deus Ex* was a game about conspiracies and mysteries that the player got to solve, and *Invisible War* is pretty much the same thing. Gamers discover stuff and it really means something to them as they play."

Harvey Smith did at least assure us we won't be seeing JC waking up in his apartment, rubbing the sleep from his augmented eyes and sighing with relief that *Deus Ex* was all a bad dream. "No, it's nothing like that! In RPGs you start the player off fresh, so you can build them up



A hunter-killer patrol bot.

again. But we didn't want to do something cheesy like making the player JC again. You're playing Alex D who has genetically descended from JC, so you're almost him, but you're still separate. A cool thing is that you can actually take JC on in a fight. He'll be pretty formidable."

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Ion Storm went on to explain the changes they have made to the nano-technology upgrade system (a techno version of RPG level-ups) used to boost your player character. "A huge part of the game is that you can power yourself up in different directions – two



Holographic jukeboxes feature bands such as NG Resonance.

## HUD-YOU-LIKE

### THE NEW *DEUS EX 2* HEADS-UP DISPLAY

Warren Spector was not happy with the HUD from *Deus Ex*, and with those in early versions of *Invisible War*. "I lost count of the times I said I wanted an interface that looks as if it's burned onto the guy's eye, and I failed completely to communicate that idea. Now I think we've nailed it." The new translucent circular retina effect looks very smart indeed, with everything rotating round neatly, elements fading in and out, and screens zooming into view. "The fact that you have access to a keyboard doesn't mean that it's right to use every key. The PC version of *Deus Ex* was so unnecessarily complex with many secondary screens that distracted the player and pulled them right out of the game world. On the PlayStation 2 version we found that we could be much more economical and enhance the experience."



*Invisible War*'s redesigned HUD has a posh new 360 degree compass.





Silas Archer of the Cairo Gifted School.

people can end up with radically different interpretations of their abilities," continued Smith. In the original *Deus Ex* you had a choice of nine augmentations for specific body areas to improve physical attributes, and 11 other skills including lock-picking and computer hacking. For *Invisible War*, the skills and augmentations have been unified into a single system known as bio-modifications, that are powered by your rechargeable internal energy supply.

#### THE BODY SHOP

Each of the 21 or so bio-mods offers two types of upgrade, such as the choice between a spy drone or enhanced vision for the eyes. In addition, the nine player bio-mod slots have three levels, each with a dramatic change of function. Alex D's enhanced vision bio-mod, for example, can progress from night vision on level one, to seeing people through walls on level two, and finally to being able to see both organic and non-organic objects through walls on level three.

You'll also be able to buy black market bio-mods (and weapons) from a creepy organisation of rubber mask-wearing gangsters called The Omar. Among these illegal upgrades are a very smart bot domination augmentation (see *I, Robot* boxout) and a health regeneration drone that coalesces out of thin air and proceeds to look for corpses or unconscious bodies that it can break down into useful cellular material, like a high-tech vampire.

Another new addition is the ability to change any of your bio-mods once they've



Tracer Tong returns in *Deus Ex 2*, along with JC Denton and his brother Paul.

been installed. "A lot of people thought that in the last *Deus Ex* they got trapped into their powers, that they couldn't change their skills and augmentations after they'd chosen them," continues Smith. "What we've done is allow you to install something over the top of an old bio-mod, restoring it to level one. But although you've been able to change bio-

mods, you might not be able to max out the new mod to level three."

*Deus Ex: Invisible War* continues the globe-trotting nature of the first game, visiting Chicago, Seattle, Antarctica, Cairo, Trier in Germany and another unrevealed final location. One of Ion Storm's main objectives from a design perspective is to make sure the game differentiates itself

**"When *The Matrix* came out with guys wearing long, black trench coats, we were like, Damn!"**

**HARVEY SMITH**  
PROJECT DIRECTOR  
ION STORM

enough from the movie, *The Matrix*. "When *The Matrix* came out it had guys wearing long, black trench coats and we were like, 'Damn!' *Deus Ex* is a futuristic sci-fi game where everyone wears long, black trench coats, what are we going to do now?" complains Smith. "So, for *Invisible War* we wanted to come up with a slightly different look and are currently working on some



A member of religious cult The Order.

## I, ROBOT

### DOMINATE THE ROBOTS IN *DEUS EX 2: INVISIBLE WAR*

One of the best new illegal bio-mods on the market in *Deus Ex 2* is Bot Domination. This handy little skill allows you ten seconds to hide your body somewhere safe, before your consciousness is transported into any nearby bot. You're now presented with the robot HUD, and can use any of the machine's abilities – ranging from the powerful destructive weapons in the giant military bots, to the accessibility and spying qualities of the little cleaner bots that can sneakily find out access codes and other information from unsuspecting enemies.



Commandeer cleaner bots to spy on guards.



Alex D uses a neural interface bio-mod to hack computers and alarm systems.



Fashions have changed in the 15 years since *Deus Ex*.

new concepts. It'll be different, but people should still recognise it as *Deus Ex*."

Each character model is made up of 3,000 polygons, but because of the dynamic lighting used in the *Unreal* engine, it looks much higher – an ingenious technique used throughout *DX2* to produce 3D textures from flat surfaces, resulting in graphically richer environments. Returning characters such as the Hong Kong scientist Tracer Tong (being kept alive by life-extending nanobots), now have realistic facial expressions and deep scars that catch the light, while soldiers have combat fatigues that wrinkle. On top of this, metal robots and rubber floors really look like they are made from real materials, complete with shadows that move correctly across their surfaces.

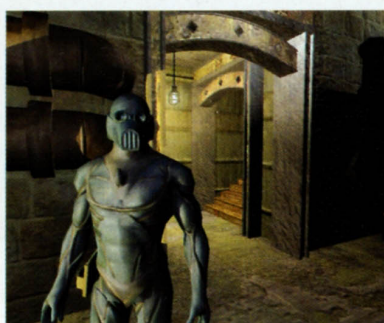
"For many other games, dynamic lighting and real volumetric shadows are just pretty pictures – they are there to make the game look cool," says Spector. "But for us it's gameplay. You're going to be able to truly create your own darkness in which to hide, and the AI is tuned to support that kind of stealth, as well as notice when lights have changed."

### THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Every light in *DX2* is dynamic rather than fixed, which apparently comes at no extra performance cost – Ion Storm is working towards 30fps running on a minimum spec PC of around a Pentium III 850 and GeForce 3-level graphics card. An explosion in a room will cause the light fittings to sway, changing shadows in real-time. Flares can be used by your character to illuminate dark areas and new flying hunter-killer robots with built-in lights can throw their beam on you to reveal your supposedly well-hidden position.

As producer Bill Money walked us through the Antarctic base level, he

showed off various other graphical jiggery-pokery including the smoke and fire effects from Alex D's flamethrower, the air conditioning fans that project shadows on the floor, and the first examples of the impressive new Havok physics system. Although Ion Storm refers to it as 'version 1.0', the results are already very cool. For example, if shot at, barrels now send out steady jets of ominous green gas from different angles depending on where they were hit. "Everything we have in the game we try and use for some kind of gameplay, so there are bio-mods that allow you to survive in toxic environments," adds



The Omar is a gimp-like black market trader. Shoot gas barrels to poison enemies.



Money. "You can be the guy who shoots gas barrels so a room is full of poisonous fumes and then craftily leads enemies into it, where they'll choke to death."

Yet the most disturbing aspect of the physics technology will be familiar to PC gamers who've played any recent first-person shooters – ragdolls. In *Deus Ex*, death animations were pre-animated, so that enemies who died side-by-side would assume the same pose, as well as sticking out over ledges and stairways in a highly unconvincing impression of rigor-mortis.

Not anymore. Human and robot characters are now modelled in 3D and given a mass and weight in the virtual environment, with certain physical restrictions to prevent arms from bending the wrong way or turning people into squid (see the physics special report on page 16 for more details). "Ragdolling is really creepy," says Smith. "It actually makes you stop and think about the fact that you've just taken down a human being."

### EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD

The genius of *Invisible War*, like *Deus Ex*, is that decisions you make at particular points in the game will have massive repercussions on what happens next. Your allegiances change considerably as part of multi-branching storylines that will present the player with no less than four different endings. And which organisation you team up with ultimately affects your relationship with the others.

The long grasping fingers of the Illuminati return once again, as does a pseudo New Age religious group called The Order, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), The Templars, and the corporation that shields Alex D at the beginning of the game, TARSUS. And did we mention JC Denton? "A lot of the time the organisations will send you on missions that are mutually exclusive," says Smith. "As a result we reveal different characters and doors in a mission, so they play a little differently depending on who your friends and enemies are."

### BULLET TIME

After the excellent demonstration of the game by the *DX2* team, there was only

## BOT LOVE

### THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL ROBOTS OF DX2

Harvey Smith: "Robots are really useful, because they present you with a powerful enemy that requires you to think of alternative solutions such as using EMP grenades to disrupt their mechanics or dominating their systems."

### NANO-TECH ANIMALS

Creatures that have been mechanically augmented – such as the vicious robot dogs.

### HUNTER-SEEKER BOT

Tries to stay hidden, so it can sneak up on you. When it gets damaged, it fires smoke canisters and backs out to find help.

### MILITARY BOT

Hugely powerful killing machines. The new collision handling will now allow you to run between their legs and hide.

### SPIDER BOT

The very popular insect-like robots from *Deus Ex* return, with both the small and monster-sized versions hunting you.







Holocom units function as computer terminals.

one thing left to do – play it. Ion Storm gave us a unique hands-on play of a level set in the Seattle penthouse apartment of a character called the Minister of Culture. We began outside the door of the Minister's gaff and decided to try to con the security guard to let us in, using *Deus Ex*'s adventure-style speech interface to speak into the intercom. No luck. Of course we could've also hacked the keycode with a multi-tool, or maybe looked for a handy air-duct, but in the end we picked the lock of a service door leading to the roof above the flat.

#### STOP THIEF!

Up top, an aerial security bot was patrolling the area, only giving us time to get into the apartment through the glass skylights – also guarded by the familiar red glow of a laser-triggered alarm system.

### “One of the weapon mods – the targeting computer – makes bullets swarm towards your foe like hornets”

This was where we could test out the new ability to add modifications to weapons, allowing you to custom-make your own armoury. We had a blaster fitted with a stealth modification that changed the basic weapon into a blaster stabilizer – an espionage tool that can melt glass without setting off alarms. Another example of a weapon mod is the targeting computer that makes bullets swarm towards your foe like hornets – although the team hasn't

or health they have, leaving the body free for you to pick up and dump in a corner away from prying electronic eyes. The AI of all the robots and humans in the game is still being tweaked to ensure that the behaviour is as realistic as possible, so guards will actively look for you if a body is discovered for example – but it's a massive undertaking with the fact that every object in the *Deus Ex 2* world is dynamic. “What other game has to

decided yet how many mods you'll be eventually allowed to add to your home-made bang stick.

Once we used the blaster stabilizer, we could sneak into the apartment undetected. But it goes without saying that in the *DX2* world we could've found numerous other ways into the flat, including cutting the power to the alarms. Inside we found the Minister in the kitchen, and feeling particularly violent, we emptied a few rounds into his head, dropping him to the floor in a heap. Though it's not implemented yet, Spector promises that they won't shy away from blood either. “This isn't a fetishistic thing, though. It's about letting players do what they want, and showing them the consequences of their actions. If you go through the game shooting at everything that moves, there is a price to pay – and it's a stiff one.”

Instead of having to search bodies, characters now just drop any weapons

cope with the fact that you might throw a chair in front of a character?” asks Spector. “The AI also has to respond to whether you killed anybody – a friend, an enemy, or a hundred people. Plus we have AI that actually exploits the kind of lighting were doing. Nobody in the world has ever done that!”

#### CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Warren Spector, Bill Money, Harvey Smith and the rest of the Austin team still have many months of work ahead, but the signs are that *DX2* will eclipse its illustrious predecessor in every way. There are still no plans for any multiplayer options as, according to Smith, “Our number one priority is making a game that's loyal to the first one. Down the road we may do level co-op or something, but it's a whole new set of design challenges.”

With ground-breaking adaptive AI, cool futuristic weaponry, multi-branching storylines, unscripted challenge-solving and four different endings, *Invisible War* is a sci-fi action RPG that everyone should be gasping to play.

But is Spector really sceptical of the conspiracy theories in his games? “In my experience, human beings are not capable of keeping secrets. Anything that the conspiracy buffs really believe, we would simply know about. I can point you to the real-world research on nano-

#### Q&A

### WARREN SPECTOR



And what about you, Mr Spector? There are few bigger names in PC gaming than that of Ion Storm's studio director

**PCZ** There are tons of anti-establishment themes in *Deus Ex*. Are you a rebel?

**WS** I wouldn't say I was a rebel, but if you ask people around here, ‘liberal’ might not explain my political stance quite enough. However, *Deus Ex* was and is a team effort – it's kind of an aggregate point of view from everyone that contributed, more than just mine.

**PCZ** There's a mention in *Deus Ex* about an earthquake destroying Los Angeles in 2030 creating ‘Arizona Bay’. Is this a reference to the late, great American comedian Bill Hicks?

**WS** Oh man, you're the first person who's caught on to that! Bill Hicks was a genius. I never met him, but I saw him live several times, and he was the funniest human being on the planet, as well as being one of the most cynical and depressed.

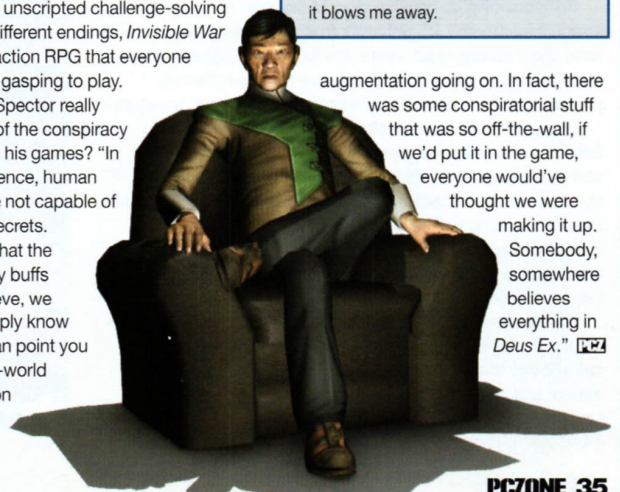
**PCZ** *Deus Ex* is quite a cynical and dark piece of work. Are you optimistic about the future of the world or is it going to be a nightmare?

**WS** Yes to both. My world view is that in the short term I tend to be very cynical, but in the long term I believe in history as a pendulum. The further things swing to the right, the more dramatic the swing to the left will ultimately be. I'm often very cynical, very depressed and despondent – especially right now! We're going to live through dark times, but we're going to come out the other side. Interestingly though, *Deus Ex* is set 50 years in the future, and the only reason for that is because we don't have the tools to re-create the world as it is today.

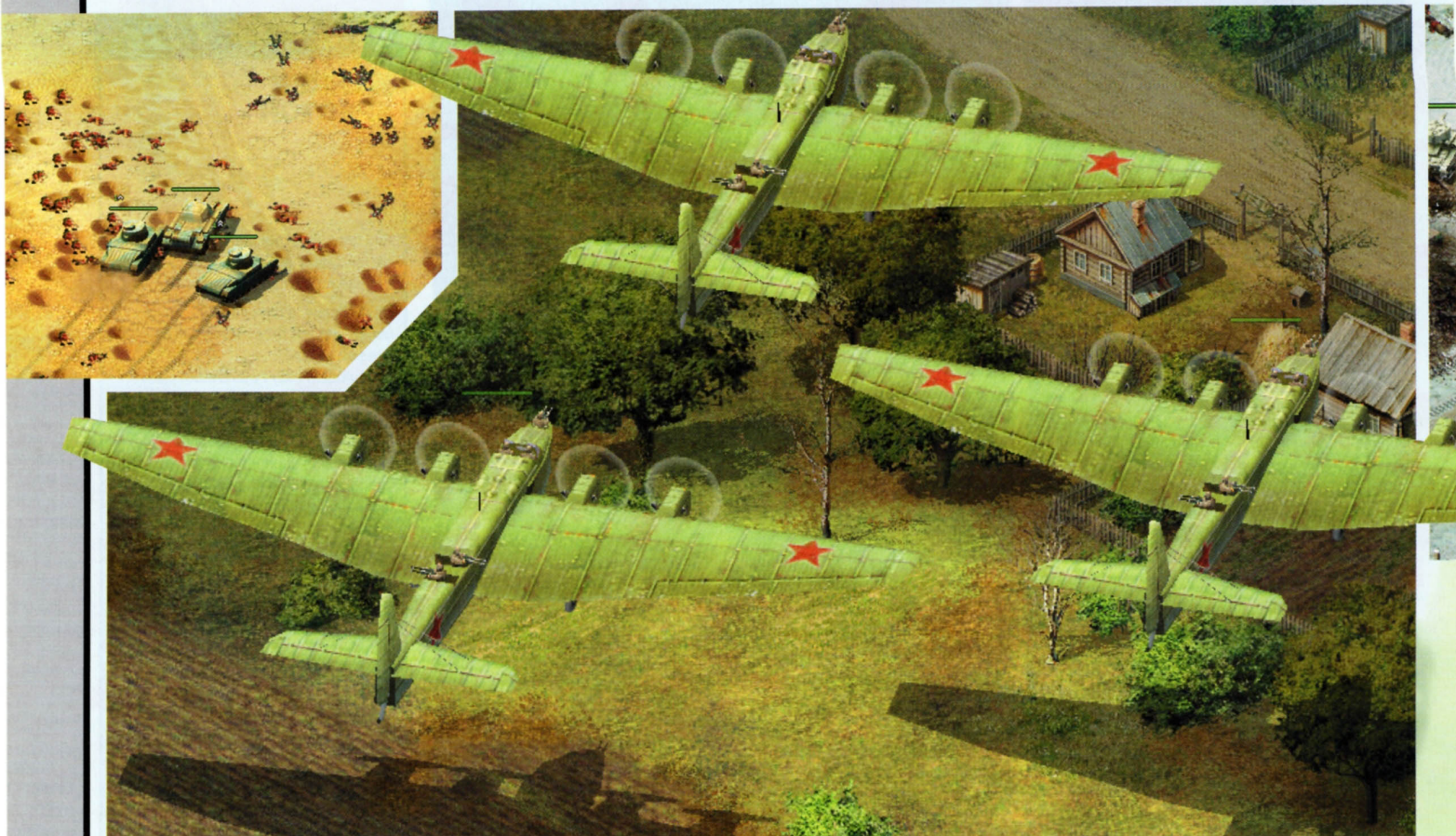
**PCZ** Finally, *Thief III* – how's it coming along?

**WS** It's coming along really well. [He pauses, then laughs]. They'd rip my tongue out if I said any more, but it's going really well. Oh my god is it going well! There's stuff in there that you're not gonna believe. I look at some of the things that they're doing right now and it blows me away.

augmentation going on. In fact, there was some conspiratorial stuff that was so off-the-wall, if we'd put it in the game, everyone would've thought we were making it up. Somebody, somewhere believes everything in *Deus Ex*.” **PCZ**







If the defences up ahead look a little tough, call in the heavy bombers to rain down a few hundred tons of explosives on the suckers.

## Achtung! Panzer!

# BLITZKRIEG

**Playability and realism combine to make a formidable offensive force. Steve O'Hagan digs in for the latest WWII RTS assault**

**WHILE OBSESSING** about the heroic role the UK played in defeating Hitler, we tend to overlook the fact that the ones who did the most to thwart the Nazi juggernaut, like it or not, were the Russians. By the time we hit the Normandy beaches in 1944, the Red Army was already kicking the door down on the Reich, and the burning issue was not "can we take Germany and stop the Nazis?", but rather "can we stop the Communists from taking Germany?"

So in deciding on how the story of the most momentous war ever is remembered, it's only right that our former Soviet cousins have some serious input. And in the world of PC games at least, what better form should that input take than an extremely promising RTS full of historical veracity and gameplay swagger?

Straight out of Moscow, Nival Interactive's eye-catching *Blitzkrieg* spans the European theatre from the beginning to end of hostilities. It's festooned with weapons, vehicles and scenarios, and an absolute almanac of background details and historical footage to offer a little in the way of education. But instead of bogging down in a world of hexagons and instruction manuals, the developer has tempered this love of military detail with rock-solid and intuitive gameplay.

"It's all about gameplay and atmosphere," begins *Blitzkrieg*'s project manager Dmitry Devishev. "We've put a tremendous amount into drawing the player into WWII with the amount of realism and historical background that we've included. But keeping you there will be great gameplay."

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Nival Interactive  
**PUBLISHER** CDV  
**WEBSITE** [www.blitzkrieg.de](http://www.blitzkrieg.de)  
**ETA** April

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Could be the finest WWII RTS to date
- Realism and playability meet head on
- Covers the European theatre from Norway to the Nile
- Nearly 300 historically accurate units

**CV**



### NIVAL INTERACTIVE

With more than 100 staff across four development teams, Nival Interactive is the biggest games developer in Russia, and in our book, one very much to look out for.

**1999** *Rage of Mages II*, a mix of RTS and RPG, is the first Nival title to make people sit up and take notice.

**2000** Another role-playing game, *Evil Islands* fails to build on the promise of *ROM II*.

**2001** A turn-based fantasy affair, *Etherlords* transcends its niche genre to appeal to all-corners. A minor classic.

**2003** With a WWII RTS (*Blitzkrieg*), a hotly anticipated turn-based fantasy sequel (*Etherlords II*) and a tactical WWII RPG (*Silent Storm*) in the pipe, 2003 should be a bumper year for this lot.



Everything from trees to town houses can be destroyed.





### WHITTLE AND HUM

Unlike more cartoonish entries in the genre, infantry won't be able to whittle down the hit points of a heavy tank with their rifles. Every vehicle is rated for front, side, rear and top armour, and every weapon for penetration and damage. So as you desperately try to manoeuvre your US Sherman tanks for a shot at the weaker rear armour of the formidable German Tiger, you'll understand why in reality a British commander suggested we should send eight Shermans for every Tiger spotted. And expect to lose seven of them. You don't need to know about the historical reality, but you'll soon come to learn about it first hand.

But when talking about playability in a strategy game, a good chunk of what you're interested in is its tactical richness. We probed Dmitry on what tools *Blitzkrieg* would

## EUROPEAN TOUR



Is that Ruud Van Nistelrooy (left)?

place at the armchair colonel's disposal to out-maneuvre his opponent.

"*Blitzkrieg* is more tactical because of the amount of units that you have to work with," says Dmitry. "This is no tank rusher's game. Best results come from using a mix of units with different capabilities. You have long and short-range artillery, tanks, self-propelled guns, rocket launchers and troop carriers. Infantry carry a diverse mix of arms from rifles to bazookas, and there is also a variety of aircraft. You can use or build trenches, barbed wire fences and anti-tank

**"You can build trenches, barbed wire fences and anti-tank obstacles"**

DMITRY DEVISHEV  
PROJECT MANAGER,  
NIVAL INTERACTIVE

### BLITZKRIEG - A GAME SO EDUCATIONAL THAT IT SHOULD BE ON THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Anyone looking for an insight into the course the Second World War took in Europe need look no further. *Blitzkrieg* includes missions from almost every aspect of the struggle, including such forgotten fronts as the 1939 Winter War between Finland and Russia, and the 1942 fighting in Tunisia that gave US troops their first taste of battle against the Nazis. What's more, each mission is accompanied by a chunk of historical info to keep it all in context.

"Each side has seven to eight historical missions taken from battles that in reality they won," explains Dmitry, "meaning you get to fight in Stalingrad for the Soviets, Normandy for the Allies and as part of operation Barbarossa (the invasion of Russia) for the Germans, to name a few. We wanted to make sure that we put the missions in chronological order and avoid 'alternative history'."

"The missions include Tobruk, the Battle of the Bulge and Operation Jupiter in Norway for the Allies; The invasions of Poland, France and Typhoon (the advance on Moscow) for the Germans; and the Soviets will be defending Moscow and Kursk as well as driving into the Ukraine and Germany itself."

obstacles, as well as lay or remove mines. And as you have only a limited number of troops and vehicles, you have to choose carefully how and where you fight."

### CLONE WARS

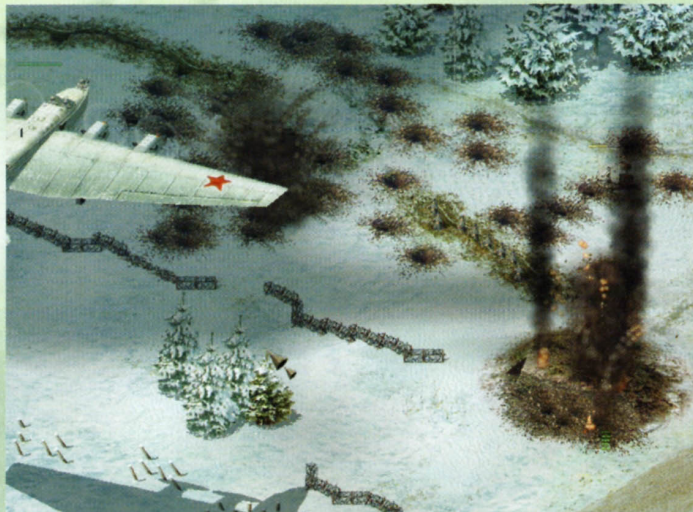
Which brings attention to the fact that *Blitzkrieg* will be another RTS to eschew the once-standard aspect of resource

gathering. "This is WWII after all – generals don't build barracks that 'clone' new soldiers on the battlefield," Dmitry points out. But in lieu of letting you build your own armies, the game at least offers the chance for you to nurture them into hardened, elite veterans.

"Your troops and units move with you from mission to mission throughout the



Icons above your units inform you of supply and morale issues.



Breaking the Mannerheim line in Finland as the Russians is no mean feat.



After heavy fighting, the battlefield can look more pock-marked than Bryan Adams.





Your artillery is always a prized asset in games of *Blitzkrieg* – guard it well.

campaign. They become more efficient fighters with bonuses for reloading times and accuracy, as well as an increased 'luck' parameter. The more experience they get, the more promotions and medals you get as their commander, which allows you to get hold of better equipment for your forces," says Dmitry.

With limited reserves, it's going to be vital to keep your troops healthy with constant battlefield repair and re-supply if they're to stay alive. To help achieve this, the maps are dotted with depots that can be controlled by either side to maintain a steady flow of bullets, shells and parts to the front, as well as maintaining morale with an abundance of provisions.

#### SCENE OF DESTRUCTION

In bringing alive the deserts, forests, snowscapes and towns the world went insane over all those years back, *Blitzkrieg* sticks to the rigid though familiar isometric viewpoint of yesteryear, but concentrates in bringing a new level of incident to the scene. So when your tanks open fire, not only does smoke and flame billow from their guns, but their turrets recoil, buffeting the whole vehicle.

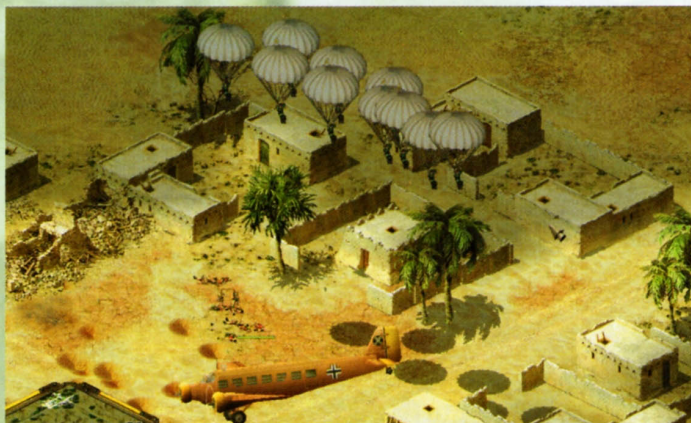
Fences and trees are crushed below the tracks of advancing heavy armour. Every shell leaves a crater, with hotly

contested areas on the battlefield ending up resembling the part of the moon where they keep the meteor magnet. And all of this on your modest, year-old PC.

An aspect of the WWII battlefield that *Blitzkrieg* perhaps takes further than any game before is air power. Every five minutes or so, you can call on aerial support from one of five categories: reconnaissance planes, fighters, tank busters, bombers, para-transports. Need to take down that enemy spotter plane that's been zeroing in his artillery? Call for a couple of fighters. Want to reduce that village to rubble? Bring in the bombers for some carpet bombing, USAF-style. Fending off an armoured assault? A pair of tank-busters will open up his panzers like tin-cans.

**"The importance of air units to you will be the same as they were in the war – vital"**

**DMITRY DEVISHEV**  
PROJECT MANAGER,  
NIVAL INTERACTIVE



Paratroopers are one of five types of aerial support you can call upon.

## PANZER PORNOGRAPHY

### EVERY YOUNG LAD LOVES A GOOD TANK, AND BLITZKRIEG PROVIDES hardcore tiger titillation

Taking its name from the German doctrine of swift, concentrated armoured attacks that would puncture front lines and burst through to envelop the static defenders, *Blitzkrieg* is understandably full of tanks. Polish shit-wagons with pea-shooters, crappy Italian Fiats seemingly continuously stuck in reverse, experimental Nazi Maus tanks that were as big as a block of flats and about as militarily viable too – if panzers are your bag, prepare to wear an 88mm wood.

What we wanted to know was how the boys at Nival got all this hardware into the game, and with such spot-on accuracy in the models. "Being in Moscow helped immensely as most of these units are in museums here," says Dmitry. "We went to see them and we were even able to compare measurements between the books and the real thing, as well as get textures for our artists! We also have a host of material in the office concerning every aspect of WWII, from experimental weaponry right down to soldier uniforms, and we took on a military historian as a consultant from the very start of the project."

From Moscow to Middlesboro, kids grow up wanting to drive tanks, so what would be Dmitry's armoured chariot of choice? "Favourite? That's a tough call. But if I had to choose only one, it would probably be the Soviet heavy assault gun SU-152 also known as the "Beast Killer". Sorry mate, never heard of it. Give us one of Blighy's finest any day – a tank with a proper codename like Valentine or Matilda. No wonder those Nazis were shit scared of us.



A fearsomely titled British Matilda tank follows a pair of French Char Bs.

"You control what type of aircraft you bring in, the time they come in, and the area of operation," explains our man Dmitry. "Once they are in the air, the AI takes over and they complete their assigned missions, handle anything else they find, and then fly out when their time is up. Their importance to you will be the same as they were to the real troops on the ground in the war – vital."

#### SUDDEN COMPARISONS

When talking to a developer working on an isometric WWII RTS, to not bring up comparisons with *Sudden Strike* would be like interviewing Michael Jackson and not asking him if likes sleeping in the same bed with other people's children. So go on then Dmitry, how is *Blitzkrieg* going to be different?

"There are many differences, but I'll concentrate on three of the biggest. First is historical accuracy. Things like shell penetration and armour values are based on actual characteristics that we researched. Even the weaponry your infantry uses follows a chronological timeline as the campaigns unfold.

"Secondly, there's the RPG-like progression for both you and your troops, with an unlimited number of random

missions available at each stage of the campaign to give you the chance to earn more experience and upgrades before taking on the historical missions.

"Thirdly is support for modders. We've provided a fully-featured map and mission editor that will even let you create and share your own campaigns, as well as a resource editor that lets you modify or add your own units, infantry, sounds, graphics and more."

So there you go *Sudden Strike*, an ill wind blows for you in the east. From our time with *Blitzkrieg*, we get the feeling this is one morsel of Muscovite militarism that your fans are going to love. [X]



Troops in a house take a pounding.



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PCZONE Classic Award

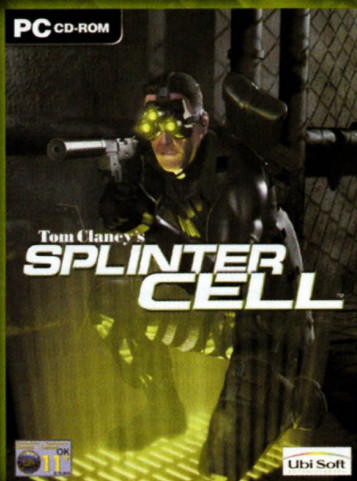
94%



"A tour de force of stealth and action, a pure videogaming experience".

*He is invisible, you'll be oblivious of his presence,  
the US government denies his existence.  
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Meet Sam Fisher at: [www.splintercell.com](http://www.splintercell.com)

[www.ubi.com/uk](http://www.ubi.com/uk)





There will be plenty of outfits available online, making *Söldner* a kind of military-themed version of Ken and Barbie.

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Wings Simulations

**PUBLISHER** JoWood

**WEBSITE** soldner.jowood.com

**ETA** Spring 2003

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- An absolutely huge gaming area with no loading times and more than 70 vehicles, including choppers and jets.
- You can destroy any part of the landscape, including terrain, buildings and vegetation.
- An amazing variety of configurable multiplayer mission types.
- A genuinely involving single-player campaign, with randomly generated missions and political intrigue.

CV

WINGS

#### WINGS SIMULATIONS

It might be a young company but it's made up of German industry veterans.

**1999** *Panzer Elite* was an excellent tank sim that prefigured *Söldner's* vast war effort.

**2000** Work starts on *Söldner*.

**2003** *Söldner* is completed. WS is also working on a massively multiplayer game which will share *Söldner's* technology.

Don't tell a soul...

# SÖLDNER: SECRET WARS

Shhh, lean closer. **Mark Hill** reveals the best kept secret in the industry

**IN THE YEAR** 2010 you will no longer be able to watch war on BBC News 24, or read about the latest military botch-up on the cover of national broadsheets. You won't even know wars are happening. Unless you're taking part in them, of course. According to German developer Wings Simulations, all international conflicts will be covert and will be fought by highly specialised mercenary forces. Not only that, these forces will travel the world in a ship disguised as a merchantman, so no one will know who they are, or where they are.

All of which is inconsequential, because what you really need to know is that *Söldner: Secret Wars* brings the concept of virtual battlefields a step closer to reality. Imagine 128 people locked in

full-on combat over a massive arena using high-tech weapons, choppers, jet fighters, a variety of armoured vehicles and even nuclear warheads. Fancy some?

#### GET LOST

Instead of giving you a number of maps, *Söldner* offers only one area. To compensate, it's absolutely huge (6500 by 3500 kilometres to be exact), and is a recreation of a chunk of the Bering Sea (between Siberia and Alaska) complete with islands and coastal regions. This means there are no loading times, and you can really let rip in your flash jet without running out of game space.

The downside is that it is possible to get lost, which, according to Teut Weidemann, *Söldner's* designer and CEO

of Wings, is part of the fun. "You have modern navigation tools," he enthuses, "and the mission areas are well marked and act as a magnet for players. Since this might be a problem for newer game players, we have the server option to limit the gameplay area around the mission objective. Still, those areas are huge, as they need to support helicopters and jets." And thanks to modern weaponry designed to work over long distances, the *Battlefield 1942* problem of actually getting close enough to an enemy to kill him should be minimised.

Although the game will support 128 players on special servers, most games will have a max of 32, so the vastness of the world could be even more problematic. Thankfully, Wings is not





The new Cyberspace engine offers a huge and amazing environment.



More than 70 weapons present a staggering number of ways of killing people.



Due to its size, players won't be able to just 'learn' a level.

aiming for a hardcore war simulation, and has done everything in its power to make it a fun experience. The team mentions *Counter-Strike* and *Flashpoint* as two of its biggest influences – which should make any gamer sit up and take notice.

#### SEEK AND DESTROY

Perhaps the most startling idea, and the one that seems to get Teut most excited,

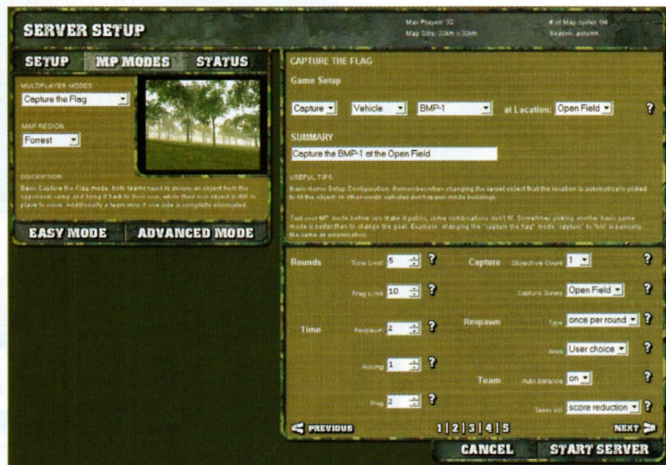
is the 'Advanced Destruction System' which allows for the total destruction of foliage and buildings. "Big weapons leave craters which makes traversing with vehicles difficult but adds cover for infantry," he explains. It also means you can hide behind fallen trees or destroy whole buildings, which should prove a very effective way of discouraging camping snipers.

## DESIGN YOUR OWN WAR

### MEET THE MOST CUSTOMISABLE MULTIPLAYER MODES EVER

Not only does the huge gaming field mean you're unlikely to tread in the same place twice, the online games can be tweaked so much that you'll probably never play the same mission-type twice either. There are nine standard modes: Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Bomb Runs, Hostage Rescue, VIP Mode, Assassination, Conquest and Soccer(!). But each of these can be edited to change objectives and parameters.

So, for example, you could alter a CTF to turn it into a Capture the Helicopter (in which case you'll have to fly it back to base without it being destroyed) or you could turn a Hostage Rescue into a weapon retrieval mission. On top of that, Expert mode will allow you to configure a vast number of additional parameters, add your own scripts and generally tinker to your heart's content. Wings is also making *Söldner* as easy to mod as possible, almost guaranteeing a long, healthy life for the game.



The online game is endlessly, and easily, configurable.

## "The 'Advanced Destruction System' lets you hide behind fallen trees or destroy whole buildings"

Doll lovers among you might also be interested in the so-called Barbie character-dressing system. "You can pick your hat or helmet, face, jacket, trousers, boots and add-ons from a huge list," says Teut. "This gives you the ability to appear as a terrorist, civilian, SWAT, special forces or heavy-duty soldier. On top of that you can change your camouflage and add team logos to personalise your vehicles. Backpacks, tattoos, sunglasses, kneepads and other stuff all add to the look as well."

This freedom with your character extends to your role. You're not forced into choosing a character class, instead – as in *Counter-Strike* – you create your own by the weapon you buy and how you play the game. But rather than have a certain amount of money per player, there is a team account from which you make purchases. This is also used for more intriguing things, like buying really large weapons and technology upgrades. You'll also be able to buy med kits and engineering tools.

#### WORLD BALANCE

In recent online shooters with a single player mode (see *Battlefield 1942*, *UT 2003* et al), the solo campaigns provide little more than training for the real thing. And while *Söldner* is very much an online

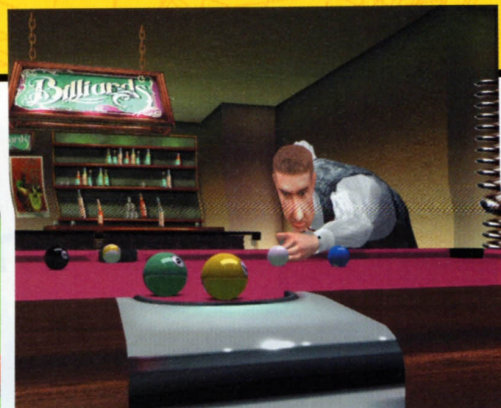
experience, the offline mode is a full game in itself. Although it's based around a random scenario generator, it seems these will also include scripted moments (ambushes for example) and ensure you never play the same game twice. Even more interesting are the political and diplomatic aspects of the campaigns. Since you play a mercenary available to the highest bidder, you'll find certain countries refuse to hire you, so you'll need to deal carefully with alliances.

Needless to say, at this stage *Söldner* looks like a fantastically grand project. The only real danger is that Wings will attempt too many new ideas, and that some of them may not work (we all know what a poor impact the destructible environments in *Red Faction* made) or that people will treat it as just another pseudo-team-based deathmatch (as happens all-too often in *Battlefield 1942*).

To counteract the second threat, each team has a nominated commander who ensures his soldiers work together. How he will do this is still unclear though, and the nightmare scenario we have already woken up in a cold sweat about is having some snotty 10-year old from Bremen barking orders at us. As always, you'll need to join a clan to guarantee a proper match. But then such is the nature of team-based online shooters. **[X2]**



**"In effect it's a point 'n' click sports sim, which sacrifices realism for a system you can pick up and run with in about two minutes"**



Not even I could miss that.



Turn the aids on and become an instant snooker master.

**Form an orderly cue...**

# WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2003

**"Keep out of the black and into the red, there's nothing in this game for two in a bed." Dave 'Whirlpool' Woods gets his club games mixed up again**

## BORED OF DRINKING

one Friday night, the PC ZONE crew decided to seek out alternative entertainment. After being refused entry to Spearmint Rhino someone suggested a few frames of snooker, so we traipsed to a nefarious den in South London made famous after some cracked-out psycho had gone postal in there the week before. Presumably after missing an easy black.

After about half an hour of not potting a single ball and marveling at the size of the tables (push a couple together and you could get a decent game of five-a-side footy going), a local warlord type arrived wearing a few peroxide blondes he'd bought for the evening. No sooner was he through the door than the 'Tournament' table was unwrapped and the raised voices around the hall slowed to a whisper. Turns out he was worse at



A load of balls.

the game than we were, but forgive us for not pointing that out to him.

## SNOOKER LOOPY

The moral of the story? Snooker is a bloody hard and bloody dangerous game, and if you're a wuss, like us, you're better off playing it in your bedroom, on your PC, where breaks of double figures are a reality and where you won't get your throat cut ear-to-ear for asking one of the blondes whether it might be possible to screw back for the brown.

*World Championship Snooker 2003* is set for release just before the erm, 2003 Snooker World Championship, and it's set to be the most realistic conversion to date, with massively improved visuals the main thrust of the new release. And while talk of cubic environment ball rendering makes about as much sense to us as not drinking on Friday nights, a particle system for the chalk dust seems a tad unnecessary, it does look bloody good though, with new TV-style camera coverage, including in-pocket cameras and loads of different locations to play.

## NUTS ARE THEY

The rules are pretty simple. Move your virtual player around the virtual table, use a gamepad or the cursor keys to line up the cue, add a bit of English, select the speed of your shot and sit back and marvel at the shot you've played. In effect

it's a point 'n' click sports sim, which sacrifices the realism of a 'mouse-cue' system for a system you can pick up and run with in about two minutes. So, with a bit of thought and patience you'll be rattling in balls from all angles. Of course, that doesn't mean you're going to be getting the mythical 147 with your first visit to the table. My early confidence was dented somewhat after being rolled over and shafted by Mark Williams 125-7 in the first frame, a scoreline which at least goes some way towards verifying the usual claims of 'advanced AI' from the developers. [X]

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Blade Interactive  
**PUBLISHER** Codemasters  
**WEBSITE** [www.codemasters.com/snooker2003](http://www.codemasters.com/snooker2003)  
**ETA** Spring 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Photorealistic balls! Well, almost anyway.
- Snooker or pool (US nine-ball and English pub eight-ball).
- 28 celebs with individual AI traits.
- Trick-Shot mode with John Virgo.



The snooker club we were in after the firearms were discharged.



Build an empire with bricks  
and mortar.





# Or build an empire with blood.



It's 1503 AD. The empire you live in depends on what you build. Will it be a prosperous city for the people to live and trade in? Or a fortress to train soldiers and launch an attack on the enemy? Live in peace or die by the sword. Either way, it's you who will decide.



## Anno 1503 The New World



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D'arr. That be your house.



As with any settlement, you have to start by chopping down trees.



What's another word for pirate treasure?



Who knew pirates were into topiary...

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Frog City Software  
**PUBLISHER** Gathering  
**WEBSITE** [www.frogcity.com/tropico2](http://www.frogcity.com/tropico2)  
**ETA** April 15

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Pirates are great, we love 'em!
- It's the first piratical city simulator
- Cheaper than a flight to the Caribbean
- Build your own brigand

**SO, WHO WAS** the greatest pirate ever? Hook? Morgan? Silver? Solo? If seeking the answer to this question is high on your list of priorities, then *Tropico 2: Pirate Cove* could well be the game for you.

First though, we have a much more pertinent question to answer, and that is, will *Tropico 2* improve on *Tropico*? The original game, as anyone who played it will know, suffered from a multitude of problems that ultimately led to us giving it a review score that was hardly the stuff of legend. Chief among its failings was its utter inability to settle on any one particular gameplay goal; the resulting mix of empire building, political intrigue and economy management left the player at best confused and at worst bored stupid.

The good news is that *Tropico 2* seems to offer a lot more in the way of defined

## Lend us your buccaneers...

# TROPICO 2: PIRATE COVE

**Chastising the parrot: Keith Pullin**

gameplay. As a sort of hedonistic cross between *Sim City*, *Zeus: Master Of Olympus* and, er... some pirate-type stuff, the entire game is based on establishing a hearty pirate empire.

#### PILLAGE AND PLUNDER

There's only one way to succeed in *Tropico 2* and that is by stealing, killing, lying and cheating. The entire Caribbean is your oyster in your quest to search

**"The talents of a (good) wench are honed after years of practice"**

out new gold and boldly go where no 'privateer' has gone before.

Pirates are a fickle bunch though, and to get them doing what they do best, they have to be happy. Your charismatic anti-

heroes must be kept amused with brothels, grog shops, gambling dens, eateries and more before they even think about setting sail in search of wealth and adventure.

But it's not just pirates you have to think about when it comes to sustaining the efficiency of your secret bandits paradise. To keep the place running smoothly you must find captives to do the monkey work, such as picking corn from fields and chopping lumber. Pirates can

also go on missions to find specialist artisans such as gunsmiths, bakers and ahem, quality whores. (Well, you ask any brigand, you can't just pluck a wench out of thin air, their talents are honed after

years of practice.) Thus if you can find a skilled French courtesan, your pirates' happiness will go off the scale.

#### DEEP OCEAN

Playing through the game also reveals a surprising amount of depth. Pirates can actually gain levels as the years progress, so if you treat your cutthroats with the respect they deserve, you'll find they gain in experience, and consequently start bringing back more loot.

While *Tropico 2* is unlikely to receive any awards for originality, it's certainly shaping up to be a highly addictive game. The forbidden glamour of the outlaw life is captured expertly, and the manifold opportunities to be ruthless and immoral should please the most wanton of marauders. You should be hoisting your Jolly Roger by April. [C]





Battles are set to be big, bloody and brutal.



Attempts to launch the first sea-plane ended in failure.

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Black Cactus  
**PUBLISHER** Empire Interactive  
**WEBSITE** www.blackcactus.com  
**ETA** April 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Stunning, fully 3D terrain
- Gargantuan battles between hundreds of mythical units
- A skirmish extravaganza
- 50 lifelike AI generals to battle against

Hold... hold... hooooooooold...

# WARRIOR KINGS: BATTLES

**Stunning 3D RTS sends apology for delayed arrival. Edited by Martin Korda**

**HELLO. MY** name is *Warrior Kings: Battles*, but my friends call me Warri. Because I worry, y'see? And that's why I'm writing to you now. I've been up all night fretting that I've let you all down, tossing, and turning and then shuffling down to the kitchen to try and calm my frayed nerves with a hot cocoa and a chockie bickie or two (oooooh, I am evil). So I've decided that the only way to put my mind at rest is to apologise to you all for my absence from this month's reviews section. So here goes... I'm sorry.

## REASONS WHY

This unplanned delay is due to some nasty bugs I picked up while on Safari in Africa. Ooooo, it was lovely though. The lions, the giraffes, the man-eating aardvarks. Well, maybe not the aardvarks, but definitely the lions. Lovely it was. Anyway, when I came back, the good doctors and Black Cactus – they're the nice people who look after me – said that I wouldn't be able to go out and play with all those (lovely) games journalists, until they made me better and cured all the

bugs I was carrying. However, I'm on the mend now, and they've assured me that I should be fixed and ready for review by the next issue of *PC Zone*. Hoorah. And hoorah once more.

Which is great news for all of you waiting to get your hands on me (oooooh, behave). Yes, next month you'll be in 3D RTS heaven as you submerge yourself in my world, a world of conflict and hatred,

a world which needs to be reunited by you. You'll be able to enjoy my massive battles, set over fully tactical 3D terrain, as thousands of mythical troops clash in blood-chilling combat across an action-packed campaign. I've got more skirmish than a pub full of Liverpudlians, more units than a footballer caught drink driving, and AI so lifelike, you'll think you're up against Napoleon himself.

**"WK:B has more skirmish than a pub full of Liverpudlians, and more units than a drink-driving footballer"**



"So that's three legs and twelve fingers, sir. Would you like that wrapped?"

## NOT JUST A PRETTY RTS

But I'm not just about skirmish, although my multiplayer games are looking hugely superior to my older sibling's (*Warrior Kings* – luv you bruv), and my online play is going to be smoother than a shaved gorilla. At least that's what Black Cactus has told me. There's more depth to me than that, though. My Valhalla mode will allow you to pick and customise an army, and place them on one of my beautiful, rolling maps and play against an equally valiant human or AI controlled force. Much like the custom battles in *Medieval: Total War* in fact.

So please do bear with me. I will be worth the wait, at least so says Martin Korda, the nice man who said he'd print this apology for me. He said, "Warri me old mate, you're looking like a cracker. You're looking like being one of the most exciting RTS games of the year. A potential masterpiece. You just get rid of those bugs and we'll see how well you turn out next month." To which I say, cheers Mart, I hope I don't let you down. Bye for now... [X]



Brace yourselves.



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You'll meet a few old friends on your travels.

**"Gothic II is shaping up to be an enjoyable bout of role-playing goodness"**



When night falls the NPC characters go inside to sleep.

**Black is back...**

# GOTHIC II

**Rhianna Pratchett enjoys a bit of rough-and-ready role-playing action**

**GOTHIC II** is a bit of a misleading title. The game doesn't involve supernatural 18th century literature, it doesn't include excessively spikey buildings and more importantly it doesn't include pale young women in skimpy black dresses, wearing boots that are double their height and an "I am Goth see me pout" look on their faces. OK, it is a bit supernatural in the way that a lot of RPGs are, and we can't really fault the "II" part, as it's the sequel to the original *Gothic* from German developers Piranha Bytes. So we'll let them off.

Unsurprisingly, the second game picks up exactly where the original left off.



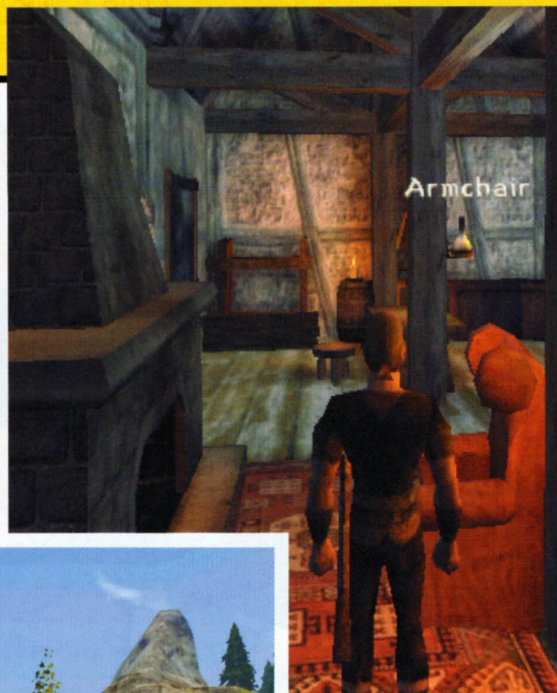
Pursued by a giant bedbug, it could only be a RPG.

Those of you who played the first *Gothic* will know that at the end of the first game you were buried underneath a pile of rubble and things weren't looking too rosy in the breathing in and out department. At the start of *Gothic II* you get a lucky break, as you're resurrected by your old wizard mentor, who cheerily reports that the foe you thought you'd vanquished in the original game has in fact come back for round two.

## BE OFF WITH THEE

So off you trundle into the world of Khorinis (look, we don't make these names up, OK?) to try and seek out a few answers and smite whatever foes may be lurking in the bushes. And there's plenty to kill as well, since the magical dome, which held a prison colony in the first game, has now been destroyed, letting all sorts of reprobates into the community. As with the original game, you don't start as a specific character. Instead, you develop gradually into one of three classes – mage, paladin and dragon slayer – through the decisions you make during the game.

Developing your character's stats isn't handled in the same point-sharing way as



Go on, put your feet up.



It's hard to feel stressed when there are plenty of sheep around.

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Piranha Bytes

**PUBLISHER** JoWood

**WEBSITE** [www.piranha-bytes.com](http://www.piranha-bytes.com)

**ETA** Q1 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- The first one wasn't bad, but was really begging for a sequel to get it right
- And here it is, with a massive new 3D world to explore
- More than 50 offensive and defensive spells
- An in-depth storyline



You just know there's going to be trouble, don't you?

many RPGs either. You earn "learning points" as you gain experience from completing quests and killing enemies, but you can't just pour these points into any old stat – you have to find someone who's willing to teach you a given skill (usually for a price or a favour) and increase your stats that way.

## HUGE TRACTS OF LAND

If you thought *Gothic* was huge then *Gothic II* is the Martin Korda bicep of gaming – an estimated five times larger than the original. You can meander through the world for hours in a very *Morrowind* style way, with the full day and night cycle changing around you and the rain soaking your tunic. However, the

graphics seem rather rough around the edges at present, so here's hoping they get fully optimised for the final version, as the environments have a great deal of potential and atmosphere.

We know there are many of you out there hotly anticipating this title, as you've written in to tell us how much you liked the original. Well at least three of you did. It will certainly be interesting to see if *Gothic II* can hold its own against the superb line-up of RPGs that have been released since its predecessor appeared. Although it might be coming from the back of the class, from what we've seen *Gothic II* is shaping up to be an enjoyable bout of role-playing goodness. **[X]**





Your status affects the prices you have to pay.



Shadow pirate vessels back to their den, then pillage.



Get involved in local politics and religious affairs.

## THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ascaron

PUBLISHER Ascaron

WEBSITE ascaron.biz/english

ETA April

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Non-linear gameplay
- Direct action ship-to-ship combat
- From the guys behind Patrician I and II
- Nice looking, for a tycoon-type game

# Cheese with that?

# PORT ROYALE

When it came to choosing someone to walk the plank, **Steve O'Hagan** was the first name on everyone's lips

**SIGNING UP** for Caribbean service in the Navy in 1570 was a risky business. For some lucky fellow-me-lads, it meant a dusky maiden in every town, beaches of white sand and more rum in the sun than was good for you. For others, no sooner had they joined up than they were sold as sex slaves to a pirate who hadn't seen a woman in five years, fed on weevils and hard tacks, and forced to share a cabin the size of a shoe box with the powder monkey.

Though unfortunately omitting the bit about sexual servitude, *Port Royale* offers the chance for us to relive these buccaneering days as a Caribbean merchant-cum-adventurer-cum-privateer in the latest Tycoon/RTS game to emerge from somewhere east of the Rhine.

## PERIOD PAINS

Not to be confused with the strictly piratical *Tropico 2* (see page 47), *Port Royale* spans four periods in the 16th and 17th centuries, each of which features a different balance of colonial power

between the four major nations – Spain, England, France and Holland.

Most of your time is spent poring over a detailed overview map, offering a pleasing rendition of the tropical terrain, complete with bubbling swamps, smoking volcanoes, native settlements and lush jungle corralled by towering mountain ranges. While it's just a simple isometric perspective, it's surprisingly evocative, displaying shiploads more imagination than your average tycoon map.

Many colonies litter the coastlines, and you sail between them trading, carousing, and fighting your way up the ladder. In each port you can zoom in to see a layout of the town and watch the inhabitants mill around. Here you can buy and sell goods in the docks, equip and repair your ship, hire men, and construct commercial buildings to generate more cash.

While the ultimate goal is to become a rich governor of a colony, how you get to those lofty

heights is down to you. Become a latter-day shipping magnate, setting up and managing convoys and trade routes to secure your success. Or what about piracy? Deck your vessel out with cannons

local bars should turn up a rumour or two that will help set you on your way.

Whatever your chosen path, as your reputation increases, you'll be offered missions and tasks from

## “Deck your vessel out with cannons and men and hoist the Jolly Roger”

and men, hoist the Jolly Roger and set about plundering every enemy vessel you encounter, ransoming the captains and launching attacks on isolated ports.

## BARFLY

Or you could opt for the way of the adventurer. Explore new coastlines on commission, discover lost tribes, locate hidden treasures. A bit of carousing in

governors, traders and other notables. You might be sent to raze an enemy town, capture a particular vessel or explore such a stretch of coastline. All good stuff.

Needless to say, your first sea battle won't be far off. Ship-to-ship combat takes place on a zoomed-in screen where you take direct command of your ships in a real-time ding-dong full of cannon balls, musketry and boarding parties. Simply point your ships in the right direction and watch as they pummel each other with broadsides. While the tactical options may be limited, it's a surprisingly enjoyable experience, especially as your last few volleys crash into the deck of your now mastless prey, prior to you unleashing your vicious boarding parties to claim the booty. Expect a review next issue. **PCZ**



Architecture and ship styles change depending on which period you play in.



Plagues, storms and brush fires are an unwelcome hindrance.



# FREELANCER

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## CLASSIFIEDS - HELP WANTED

### BOUNTY HUNTER

Recent reforms have made this position very valuable and very lucrative.

Extremely dangerous. Only the strong will be considered. When you find us, you will have passed the first test.  
\*\*Black Stars\*\*

### JOIN CAMBRIDGE'S FINEST

#### LIBERTY POLICE OFFICERS

The Cardamine problem is making crime more than just a statistical blip. We need someone familiar with Hunter missiles and Mark IV lasers. Must be an expert flier; we only accept the best.  
1-2245.A79

### RED HESSIAN

Liberty Systems. This exciting career field is what you've been looking for! Learn the skills needed to start working right now! With our 12-step training system, you'll be ready to begin

### EXPERIENCED LANE HACKER NEEDED

Work in the dangerous Straits of Magellan. We don't flinch, and nothing gets by us. We're looking for a single addition to our staff, someone who can hold up to pressure and isn't afraid to take what isn't his.  
1-2245.C241

### BE YOUR OWN BOSS!

Liberty Systems. There's an untapped load of boron around Pittsburgh. Or so we've heard. We're looking for someone to smuggle it through the debris field. Be in the right place at the right time.

### LIBERTY NAVY OFFICER

We're looking for men and women to bust pirate rings and protect the trade lanes. If you have an eye for justice, we want you.

### SEEKING EXPERT FLIERS

#### LIBERTY NAVY

New York System. Command a fleet of heavy fighters and sweep the Badlands of Rogues. Must be an expert flier and a skilled fighter who doesn't blink under pressure.

### COWARDS NEED NOT APPLY

#### BECOME A BOUNTY HUNTER

New Berlin System. A beleaguered police force and rapidly multiplying crime sectors have made Bounty Hunters some of the highest paid people in the solar system. It is a job of extreme danger; your abilities must be superior.

### LIBERTY POLICE OFFICER

Manhattan. Justice is the only path toward enlightenment. If

### INDEPENDENT MERCHANTS

New Tokyo System. Everybody wants something, and you can be the guy they get it from. There is big profit in crossing enemy lines. We will contact you.

### LANE HACKER

New London System. If it's independence you're looking for, we offer you the chance to disrupt the flow of cargo, bust shipments and take what you want.  
1-4156.K63

### MOTIVATED SELF-STARTERS WANTED

#### BECOME AN INDEPENDENT MERCHANT FIND OUT NOW!

Work for yourself and make big profits! Smuggle pharmaceuticals and other commodities across enemy lines, and make your own rules. If you're interested, there are ways you can get initiated.



Become a smuggler or a ruthless space thug, a naval hero or a trader. Dodge through asteroid fields while piloting elite fighters. The action is endless as you make your way through 48 known star systems. Greed, morality, compassion, anger... whatever motivates you, the dynamic universe will respond. Take the first step. The universe is waiting.

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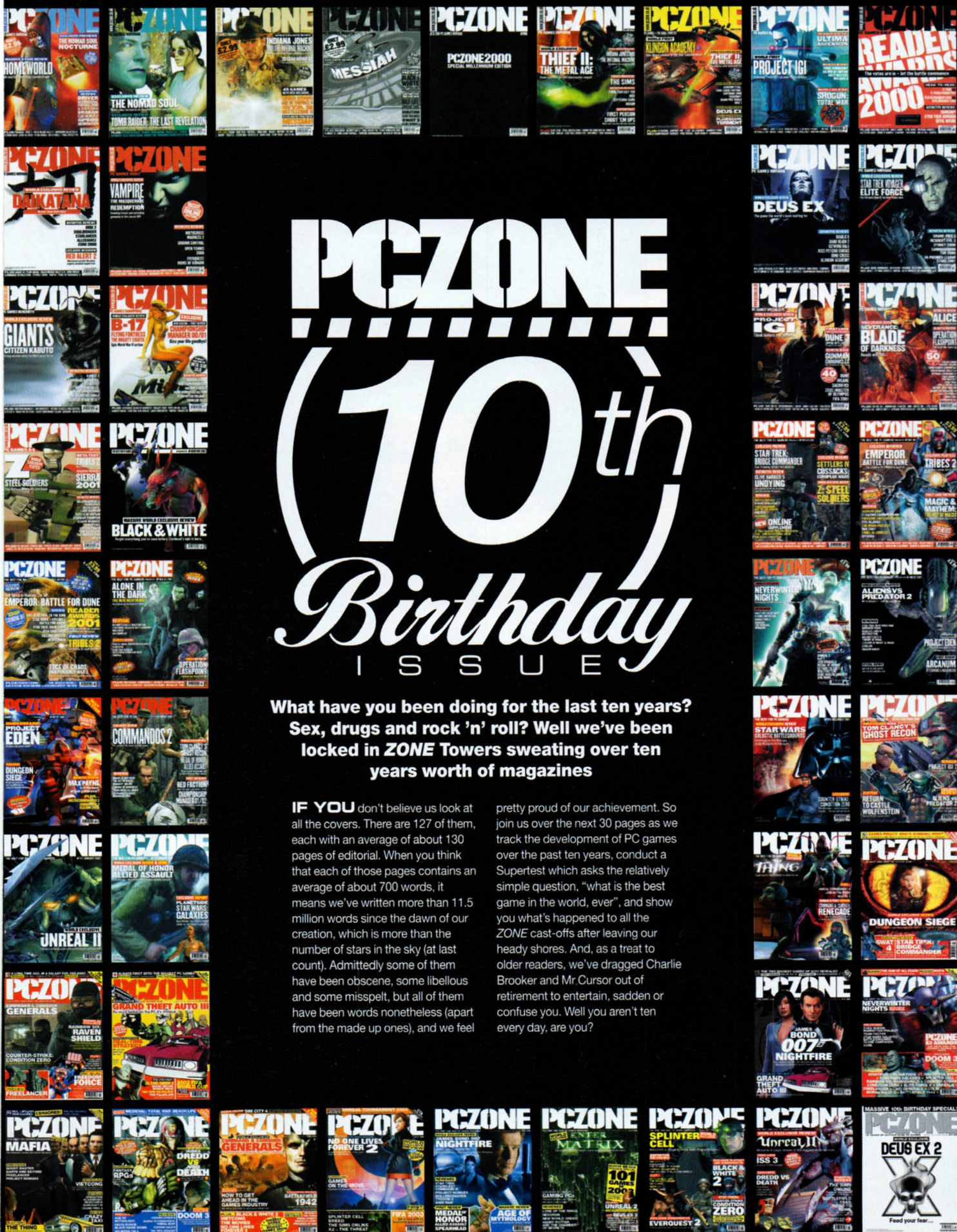


# PCZONE (10<sup>th</sup>) Birthday ISSUE

What have you been doing for the last ten years?  
Sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll? Well we've been  
locked in **ZONE** Towers sweating over ten  
years worth of magazines

**IF YOU** don't believe us look at all the covers. There are 127 of them, each with an average of about 130 pages of editorial. When you think that each of those pages contains an average of about 700 words, it means we've written more than 11.5 million words since the dawn of our creation, which is more than the number of stars in the sky (at last count). Admittedly some of them have been obscene, some libellous and some misspelt, but all of them have been words nonetheless (apart from the made up ones), and we feel

pretty proud of our achievement. So join us over the next 30 pages as we track the development of PC games over the past ten years, conduct a Supertest which asks the relatively simple question, "what is the best game in the world, ever", and show you what's happened to all the **ZONE** cast-offs after leaving our heady shores. And, as a treat to older readers, we've dragged Charlie Brooker and Mr Cursor out of retirement to entertain, sadden or confuse you. Well you aren't ten every day, are you?





Ten years of **PC ZONE**, ten incredible years of PC games. It's a time for reflection, a bit of stocktaking, and a quick check for grey hair, as the UK's first and best PC games mag invites some of the most influential blokes in the industry to dissect the decade past and mull over the future ahead. **Anthony Holden** joins the fray...

# THE FIRST

**1993. GRUNGE** rock. Ill-advised body piercings. Mr Blobby tops the charts, Kurt Cobain attempts suicide – it was a difficult year for us all. Luckily it was also a vintage year for PC gaming, with the release of *Doom*, *X-Wing*, *Syndicate* and *Sam & Max Hit The Road*. And into this whirling vortex of conflict and excitement there came a very special magazine. Not just the UK's first dedicated PC games mag, but the best goddamn PC games mag in the whole world! (That's er, *PC ZONE*, for those with short attention spans.)

It's ten years to this issue since *ZONE* first hit the streets, and, unlike Mr Blobby, we're still going strong. The advances made in PC gaming through

that time have been nothing short of extraordinary, and as part of our birthday celebrations, we've decided to have a look back at the past decade, weigh up the current state of the world and ask where things are going in the next ten years. It's no small undertaking, but fortunately we've managed to enlist the help of some of the industry's most influential figures to lend us their insight (and hopefully make complete asses of themselves with their ridiculous forecasts). Check out the boxout over the page for a more thorough intro to our assembly of game gurus, then strap yourselves in as we begin... an exciting journey through the past, present and future of PC games.

## PART 1: THE PAST

If you've ever met a game developer, you'll know that they love to talk. Especially about games. Give 'em half a chance and they'll talk your leg off with details about the latest rendering techniques and advances in real physics and how much they loved *GTA* and what a nightmare it is to make a game work on every possible PC hardware configuration and isn't that *Doom III* looking nice? Needless to say, they just

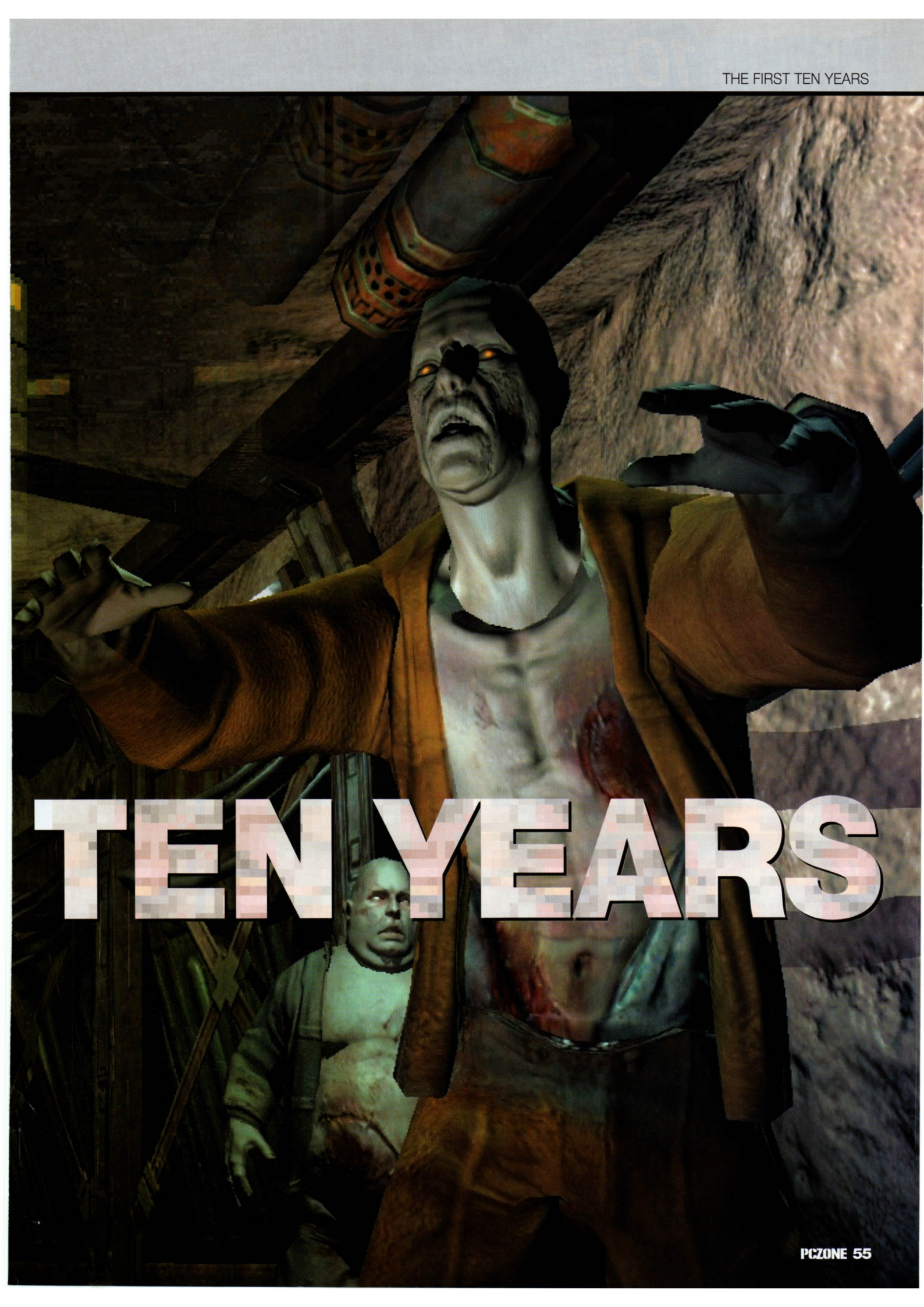
need a little bit of direction, so we begin our discussion with a simple inquiry: How have PC games developed over the past 10 years? What have been the key turning points, the crucial developments, the games that have moved the goalposts or taken the PC in a different direction? Take it away lads...

**Peter Molyneux:** "Well, there's been a huge amount of progress from all 2D to all 3D, the invention of the RTS and the death of the text adventure. There's

**"It's ten years to this issue since *ZONE* first hit the streets, and, unlike Mr Blobby, we're still going strong"**



# TEN YEARS





## "The PC still remains the best platform to create innovative games."

JAVIER ARÉVALO PYRO STUDIOS

been the rise of the first-person shooter and the whole Sims phenomenon. None of this could have been imagined ten years ago."

**Warren Spector:** "Even in 1993, we were still basically thinking in terms of beeps and boops and sprites!"

**Javier Arévalo:** "It's also amazing how big we have got. The advances in technology and production sizes are mind-blowing, and it's really hard to compete, but the PC still remains the best platform to create innovative games."

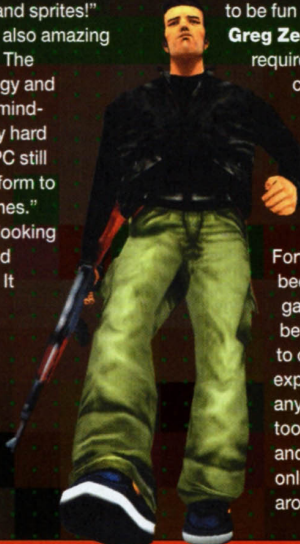
**David Perry:** "Now, looking back ten years, the old games look like crap. It amazes me that in another ten years – 2013 – what we are currently looking at today will look like complete ass to us. Can you imagine *Doom III* looking like

*Doom I* ten years from now?"

**Ray Muzyka:** "Clearly PC Games have changed, not just in graphics but AI, sound, multiplayer/Internet functionality, but in many ways they're still based on the same premise: they have to be fun and easy to play."

**Greg Zeschuk:** "Sure, but the required level of immersion and complexity has increased significantly. A gameplay mechanism that worked one year is outdated by the next – it's a challenging and unforgiving market."

Fortunately developers have been up to the challenge and games just keep getting better. *Doom* showed us how to create a complete gaming experience that transcends any single element. *Half-Life* took the immersion further, and built the most vibrant online gaming experience around. *Diablo* showed action



## DEAD ENDS #1: VIRTUAL REALITY

### THESE WORDS MIGHT SEND A SHIVER DOWN YOUR SPINE NOW, BUT TEN YEARS AGO THIS WAS THE 'FUTURE'

How's this for a non-starter then? In the early '90s, VR was being heralded as the next big thing, the future of games, education, the Internet and even the sex act. Problem was, no developers got behind the idea, and even if they had, no one wanted to play games with a bloody big helmet on – and that's if they could afford the equipment in the first place. As a result, VR never really made it out of the arcades. Still, you never know, ten years from now...



## 14 OUR ESTEEMED GUESTS...

JUST TO BREAK WITH THE 'EVERYTHING IN TENS' THEME, WE'VE ASSEMBLED A PANEL OF NO LESS THAN 14 OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST RESPECTED LUMINARIES TO OUR LITTLE BIRTHDAY CHAT (OK, SO WE INVITED 15 BUT ROMERO BLEW US OUT FOR A CRIMSON GLORY REUNION SHOW). LET'S MEET OUR GUESTS...



**PETER MOLYNEUX,**  
FOUNDER AND CEO,  
LIONHEAD

Age: 43  
What were you doing in 1993?

Finishing *Syndicate* and *Theme Park* at Bullfrog.

What are you doing now?

Running Lionhead Studios.

PC games you've developed?

*Populous*, *Powermonger*, *Populous 2*, *Syndicate*, *Theme Park*, *Dungeon Keeper*, *Black & White*.



**WARREN SPECTOR,**  
DIRECTOR, ION STORM

Age: 47  
What were you doing in 1993?

I was at ORIGIN working primarily on *Wings of Glory*, and *System Shock*, out-of-house, if memory serves.

What are you doing now?

Running Ion Storm. PC games you've developed? To name but a few, I've worked on: *Ultima VI*, *Wing Commander*, *Space Rogue*, *Ultima Underworld 1 and 2*, *Ultima VII Part 2*, *System Shock*, *Cybermage*, *Deus Ex*.



**GABE NEWELL,**  
CO-FOUNDER AND  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
VALVE SOFTWARE

Age: 40

What were you doing in 1993?

Working at Microsoft.

What are you doing now?

Getting yelled at for not shipping *Team Fortress 2*.

PC games you've developed?

*Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike*, and related titles.



**JAY WILBUR,**  
SPIRITUAL ADVISOR,  
EPIC GAMES

Age: 42

What were you doing in 1993?

Running the business side of id Software.

What are you doing now?

Working with Epic Games, makers of the Unreal engine.

PC games you've developed? None... I'm a blood-sucking biz guy type.



**RANDY PITCHFORD,**  
PRESIDENT, GEARBOX  
SOFTWARE

Age: 31

What were you doing in 1993?

Playing *Wolfenstein 3D*.

What are you doing now?

Still trying to make something better.

PC games you've developed?

*Duke Nukem 3D*, *Atomic*, *Shadow Warrior*, *Half-Life: Opposing Force* and *Blue Shift*, *Tony Hawk's 3 (PC)*, *007: Nightfire*, *C-S: Condition Zero*, *Halo (PC)* – in dev.



**DR. GREG ZESCHUK,**  
JOINT CEO, BIOWARE

Age: 34

What were you doing in 1993?

Starting BioWare, creating medical education software and doing my internship.

What are you doing now?

Running BioWare and making *Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic*.

PC games you've developed? Co-executive producer on all of BioWare's games: *Baldur's Gate* series, *Shattered Steel*, *MDK2*, *MDK2: Armageddon*, and *Neverwinter Nights*.



## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #1: DUNE II, 1992

A SIM CITY CLONE WHICH IS ALSO A REAL-TIME SHOOT 'EM UP? WHATEVER NEXT...

When Westwood's *Dune II* appeared in the very first issue of *PC Zone* it was met with a modicum of confusion. Certainly we liked it, saying "it's so simple it's brilliant." It's just that we couldn't put a finger on what exactly the game was. We settled for "a *Sim City* clone which is also a real-time shoot 'em up." Unsatisfactory to say the least.

Despite receiving a trifling 89 per cent in our review, *Dune II* was later proclaimed as the father of the real-time strategy game, a style which gained something of a following in later years. As Dr. Greg Zeschuk puts it: "*Dune II* was a pivotal title, creating the RTS experience so many gamers now take for granted in games like *WarCraft*, *StarCraft* and *Age Of Empires*." Which just shows what we know.

Randy Pitchford adds: "One of the most significant evolution points in PC interactive entertainment over the past ten years is the growth of the RTS into a market leading genre." Of course, the success of the genre cannot be solely



Despite some very arcade tendencies, there's no mistaking the RTS blueprint at work beneath the crude environments.

credited to *Dune II*, and it took the work of many other leading developers to mould the genre we know today. Several of our panelists cited *WarCraft II* as more significant than any of Westwood's games, and certainly Blizzard did a lot to bring the genre to the mainstream and incorporate greater storytelling elements. Other defining moments include *Total Annihilation*, *Homeworld* and *Shogun: Total War*. You can read about the most recent incarnation of the genre on page 94.

RPGs could be hugely successful. *Baldur's Gate* showed more traditional RPGs could also be successful."

**Warren Spector:** "Also, the range of subject matter has become broader – this is no longer solely an industry of D&D geeks making games for other D&D geeks. We're not quite mass market or mainstream yet but we've been making steady progress in that direction."

**Richard Garriott:** "Online and multiplayer have really taken off as well. Multiplayer games like *Battlefield 1942* and online games like *Ultima Online*, *EverQuest* and *Lineage* have been a very exciting development indeed! *Doom* and *Quake* were pivotal titles for the FPS, while *Battlefield 1942* has made strides in diverse-role multiplayer."

**Gabe Newell:** "So, the biggest advances have been in graphics, networking and usability."

**Warren Spector:** "We're making progress in other areas, too – there's still a long way to go but we're capable of telling more sophisticated stories than we were telling ten years ago. Best of all, we're able to simulate a lot more than we used to, meaning players can now make real choices instead of picking preplanned paths or selecting from a few canned options, and that means they're beginning to take their place as genuine collaborators in the creative process, where they belong."

Interestingly, our line-up of luminaries could not quite agree on what were the most influential titles of the past decade.



A handful of the more obvious choices were more or less unanimous – *Doom*, *Quake*, *Unreal*, *Half-Life/Counter-Strike*, *Ultima Online*, *Command & Conquer*, *WarCraft*, *EverQuest*, *The Sims* – yet there were a few wildcards in the bunch too. David Perry cites *Microsoft Flight Simulator* as a pivotal title, Jay Wilbur mentions *Wing Commander* and Will Wright names *Tribes*, *Homeworld* and *System Shock* among his top six.

Conspicuous by their absence were *Age Of Empires*, *Shogun: Total War*,

## 10 MOST ANTICIPATED GAMES OF 2003

**1 DOOM 3**  
ETA: Q4, 2003

**2 DEUS EX 2**  
ETA: Q3, 2003

**3 ROME: TOTAL WAR**  
ETA: Q4, 2003



**4 BLACK & WHITE 2**  
ETA: Autumn 2003

**5 COUNTER-STRIKE: CZ**  
ETA: June 2003

**6 STAR WARS: GALAXIES**  
ETA: Q4, 2003

**7 HALO**  
ETA: Summer 2003

**8 ENTER THE MATRIX**  
ETA: May 15, 2003

**9 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY**  
ETA: April 2003

**10 EVERQUEST 2**  
ETA: Q4, 2003



*Half-Life*: an unassuming little shooter based on modified *Quake 1* code...

*Deus Ex*, *Black & White* and *GTA*, and not even Larry Holland mentioned any of the LucasArts adventures (choosing to enter *Deer Hunter* into discussion instead). Only Rebellion's Jason Kingsley refuses to be drawn at all, saying: "I don't see any game as truly pivotal, I think they've all been evolutionary, and everyone has built on the shoulders of others." Fence-sitter.

### PART 2: THE PRESENT

Whatever your choice of defining moments, it's clear that the last ten years have been incredibly productive for PC games. But where has it all left us? Despite assaults from increasingly powerful TV-based consoles, the PC is in good shape. It's still the premier platform for cutting edge games and games technology.

It's still the only way to play a wide selection of excellent online titles and still supported by an incredible modding community. But it's not all champagne and roses, and one key concern in the industry still seems to be that recurring bugbear, the dearth of real originality.



### PIVOTAL MOMENTS #2: DOOM, 1993

#### THE BIRTHPLACE OF AN OBSESSION

We all remember *Doom*. It only took a few steps into the game's dismal labyrinths to realise that we were dealing with something special. The graphics were years beyond anything else at the time, the sense of immersion truly dizzying. It was like every other game we'd ever played was just a toy, where this was a life-affecting experience. It was probably the first truly scary game, and for many of us the game that got us hooked on PC games.

Aside from laying down the blueprint for the most enduring and popular genre on the PC, *Doom* was also the game that popularised the shareware distribution model, the playable demo, the licensing of game engines, the deathmatch – its impact simply cannot

**Jay Wilbur**: "I believe we have hit a creative wall as of late, with little innovation coming out of our industry. There's lots of "just like [insert game name here] only better" and while some of these titles kick ass, I think there has been very little in the way of genre-creating developments in the past several years."

**Laurence Holland**: "Yes, the number of successful game design experiments and breakthroughs in the past ten years has been meagre."

**Javier Arévalo**: "It is much riskier now; you just don't know how the mass market is going to receive new game concepts."

**Warren Spector**: "I honestly don't think things are any worse now than they used to be – the '80s weren't some golden age of innovation or creativity or anything! There are as many creative people doing amazing things now as there have ever been, you still have start-ups doing incredible things and some big-name folks using their clout to



Like a shotgun to the face, *Doom* struck the industry with force.

be underestimated.

Javier Arévalo perhaps sums it up best, when asked to name the most significant titles of the past decade: "One word: *Doom*. It spawned a new genre, was open for user-created content, got many of us into multiplayer gaming, and was just plain cool."



**LAWRENCE HOLLAND, CEO, TOTALLY GAMES**

Age: 45

**What were you doing in 1993?** Shipping *X-Wing*, designing its expansion disks and designing *TIE Fighter*.

**What are you doing now?** Designing and product leading a PS2/Xbox/PC flight combat game.

**PC games you've developed?** *Battlehawks 1942*, *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* series, *Star Trek Bridge Commander*.



**CLIFF 'CLIFFYB' BLESZINSKI, LEAD DESIGNER, EPIC GAMES**

Age: 27

**What were you doing in 1993?** Graduating high school and putting the finishing touches on *Jazz Jackrabbit*!

**What are you doing now?** Wrapping up the *UT2003* Bonus Pack and promoting the hell out of *Unreal 2: The Awakening*.

**PC games you've developed?** *The Unreal*, *UT* and *Jazz Jackrabbit* franchises.



**JASON KINGSLEY, JOINT CEO, REBELLION**

Age: 38

**What were you doing in 1993?** Starting Rebellion and working on the original *Aliens vs Predator* on the Atari Jaguar.

**What are you doing now?** Directing work on a number of titles, not least *Dredd vs Death*, running two comics, a company, and running out of time...

**PC games you've developed?** *Blade Warrior*, *Murder*, *Eye of the Storm*, *AvP*, *AvP Gold*, *The Mummy*, *Gunlok*, *Dredd vs Death*, *Wardog*.



**RICHARD 'LORD BRITISH' GARRIOTT, FOUNDER AND CEO, DESTINATION GAMES**

Age: 42

**What were you doing in 1993?** Developing *Ultima VII*.

**What are you doing now?** Developing *Tabula Rasa* with NCsoft.

**PC games you've developed?** *Akalabeth*, *Ultimas I* through *IX* plus mission disks and spin offs, *Ultima Online*.



**DR. RAY MUZYKA, JOINT CEO, BIOWARE**

Age: 34

**What were you doing in 1993?** Early work on *Shattered Steel*, and finishing up a couple of medical education computer projects (and my medical residency).

**What are you doing now?** Running BioWare and making *Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic*.

**PC games you've developed?** Co-executive producer on: *Baldur's Gate* series, *Shattered Steel*, *MDK2*, *MDK2: Armageddon* and *NWN*.



**DAVID PERRY, PRESIDENT, SHINY ENTERTAINMENT**

Age: 25. OK I am lying.

**What were you doing in 1993?** That's when I got all brave and founded Shiny Entertainment, leaving a decent, well-paid job to work on a game about a worm in a cybernetic suit.

**What are you doing now?** Putting the finishing touches on *Enter the Matrix*.

**PC games you've developed?** *Enter the Matrix*, *Sacrifice*, *Messiah*, *MDK*, *Earthworm Jim*.



**JAVIER ARÉVALO, PYRO STUDIOS**

Age: 32

**What were you doing in 1993?** Majoring in Computer Science and working at the IT department of a bank.

**What are you doing now?** Juggling balls as Project Director on the recently-completed *Praetorians*.

**PC games you've developed?** *Speed Haste*, *NBA Inside Drive 2000*, the *Commandos* series and *Praetorians*.



**WILL WRIGHT, CO-FOUNDER, MAXIS**

Age: 43

**What were you doing in 1993?** Just finished *SimAnt*, starting to work on *The Sims*.

**What are you doing now?** Still working on *The Sims Online*.

**PC games you've developed?** *Raid on Bungeling Bay*, *SimCity*, *SimEarth*, *SimAnt*, *SimCity 2000*, *SimCopter*, *The Sims*, *The Sims Online*.



## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #3: THE RISE OF INTERNET GAMING, CIRCA 1996

IT'S NOT JUST FOR LOOKING AT PEOPLE HAVING SEX – YOU CAN PLAY GAMES TOO

"The number one most important change in PC games in the last 10 years? The Internet! (and the death of modem-to-modem games)." So says Randy Pitchford at least. And given that CSports.net, the UK's premier online PC gaming resource, currently logs some 16,296,000 active players, we suspect he may be on to something.

Yes, younger readers, it's true, there was once a time before the Internet. Dark days they were. If you wanted a piece of information, you actually had to look it up in a book or ask an old person. You had to pay for things like music and pornography (with real money!), and if you wanted to play videogames with strangers you had to go to the chippie and wait for someone to challenge you at *Blasteroids*. You kids don't know you're alive...

As we all know, the Internet was invented in the '60s so that boffins and generals could rule the world through a secret network of room-sized



**Quake: online gaming behemoth.**

computers and private phone lines, but in 1991 someone finally realised they could make a bit of money out of it and opened the whole thing up to the public. Even then the Net was a bit crap, and online gaming consisted mostly of text- and turn- based games until *DOOM* came along in 1993. It's been a steady evolution since then, but since we're talking about pivotal moments here we've chosen 1996, which marked the release of the 28.8K modem, the first proper 3D online shooter (that being *Quake*) and probably the first time your mum asked you what this new Interweb thingy was all about. We don't need to tell you the rest.



**X-wing by Totally games: when Star Wars games pushed the frontier.**

**"It's hard to look at *The Sims* and say 'The Man has got me down and won't let me build my vision' "**

**GABE NEWELL VALVE SOFTWARE**

the history of the PC, but sadly we haven't seen an eruption of equally risky titles in its wake.

Nonetheless, Richard Garriott sees plenty of cause for hope: "As long as technology is changing rapidly, digital entertainment will still largely be based on a race to exploit the new advancements.

But the technological goalposts move so fast that huge creative advancements take place anyway. For example, broad new technologies such as online continue to breed whole new gameplay styles. And when the evolution of technology slows a bit,

we'll see more competition in the areas of content, and we'll have more tools at our disposal in ways that are similar to the movie business." Let's hope he's right, or we'll all be playing *Crash Bandicoot 12* in another ten years.

### PART 3: THE FUTURE

And so we come to the fun part of today's journey through time – the future. This is where we ask our array of gaming boffins to draw on all of their industry experience and conjure a vision of tomorrow's gaming terrain in their frosty crystal balls. Last time we did this (for *PC ZONE*'s Special Millennium Edition), they all hedged their bets a bit, though someone still managed to predict that the Xbox would have "an

push through risky projects. What we DO have now is much more competition and much higher costs – there are just a lot of games being made, competing for an audience that isn't enough bigger than it used to be to soak up the additional risk. That means sequels and imitations do seem to rule the day but I bet the total number of truly original

games is the same as it used to be."

**Randy Pitchford:** "There are new ideas all the time. Some folks claim that commercial interests have led to a downturn in creativity, but it's not true."  
**Laurence Holland:** "Of course it is – more sequels and licensed properties have resulted in a lot of shoddy products. And that's the way it's going to remain, unless a way is found to make cheap games."

**Gabe Newell:** "It's hard to look at *The Sims* and it's phenomenal commercial success and say, 'The Man has got me down and won't let me build my vision.' Will Wright had a clear idea of what he wanted to build, it was totally different than anything else out there, it was very risky, and it's made gobs of money."  
**Will Wright:** "Still, the most successful games by far right now are sequels to existing franchises."

As far as *PC ZONE* can make out, part of the problem rests not with the publishers or the developers, but with us, the humble gamers. One of the key pleasures we obtain from PC gaming is the feeling that we are riding at the very edge of this great wave of technological advancement. This, clearly, is also our curse, as it means we're often sold the same game over and over again with newer graphics in place. Oddly enough, the game that the industry types keep coming back to as a bastion of bravery and creativity is that often cursed mainstream hit, *The Sims*. Here was a totally new kind of game that went on to become the single most successful entertainment franchise in



## 10 MOST UNDERRATED PC GAMES BY UK GAMING PUBLIC

### 1 HOSTILE WATERS Rage



### 2 WARRIOR KINGS Black Cactus

### 3 Z STEEL SOLDIERS Bitmap Brothers

### 4 STARTOPIA Mucky Foot

### 5 HOMEWORLD: CATAclysm Barking Dog

### 6 CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING Dreamworks Interactive

### 7 GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO Planet Moon Studios

### 8 MECH COMMANDER 2 Microsoft

### 9 PROJECT EDEN Core Design

### 10 CODENAME OUTBREAK GSC Game World

## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #4: ULTIMA ONLINE, 1997

### THE DAWN OF ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING, AND THE SILLIEST ACRONYM IN HISTORY

If *Doom* gave us the deathmatch, then *Ultima Online* gave us the online RPG. Certainly the idea had existed before, not only in text-based form but in seminal graphic role-players such as *Meridian 59*, but it was *UO* that really nailed the concept. And thus we entered the age of the Massively Multiplayer Online RPG.

Set in the huge fantasy realm of Britannia, *UO* followed classic role-playing lines, allowing you to go on quests, collect treasure and gradually develop the abilities and strengths of your character. It was a simple concept, but one that, with addition of thousands of other actual human players in the same game-space, proved hugely compelling (often to the point of obsession). "*Ultima Online* was a crucial title," asserts Dr Greg Zeschuk. "It created the most amazing online experience well before anyone believed it could be possible."

*EverQuest* followed in 1999, offering



**UO: the dark lord of MMORPGs.**

a 3D, first-person perspective massively multiplayer experience. The occasional real-world, addiction-related tragedy notwithstanding, the worldwide success of *EverQuest* is unrivalled, leading to the mind-boggling proliferation of MMOGs in the last two to three years (spurred on by the irresistible temptation of the subscriber-based revenue model).

There are now around 20 massively multiplayer worlds live online (in English at least), and unbelievably, around 100 more in development (it's true – we keep a list!). Of these, we reckon *Star Wars Galaxies*, *EverQuest II* and *World Of Warcraft* will do quite nicely for themselves. We can't vouch for the rest.



## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #5: DEATH OF THE ADVENTURE GAME, CIRCA 1998

FROM MARKET LEADER TO NOSTALGIA PIECE...

At the beginning of the '90s, the traditional adventure game was big business. In 1993, the year *PC Zone* launched, two of the greatest examples of the genre, *Sam & Max Hit The Road* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, both saw release. The brilliant *Monkey Island 2* was still installed on most self-respecting gamer's hard drives, the promising *Beneath A Steel Sky* was just around the corner – the future looked bright for adventure gamers.

Of course, it was the graphic adventure that was at the cutting edge of interactive entertainment, its ageing text-based predecessor having been reduced to sitting in the corner and occasionally embarrassing its offspring with a half-remembered war anecdote. But little did anyone know that within five short years the graphic adventure would itself be facing premature retirement. Rendered archaic and clumsy by fancy new action games and squeezed out by increasingly emphasis on storyline in other genres, the adventure game suffered an amazing



*Sam & Max: a sequel is on the way.*

and sudden fall from grace. From ruling the world one minute, the point-and-click adventure joined horsemeat, ugly porn and mullet hairdos as one of those odd anachronisms that are enjoyed only in continental Europe.

We've dated the downfall of the genre here to 1998, the year *Grim Fandango*, LucasArts' last great point-and-clicker was released. But of course all is not lost, and the genre is currently in the process of reinventing itself in a more action-focused mould. Sequels to *Sam & Max*, *Full Throttle* and *Grim Fandango* are all in the works, and we can't wait to see what form they take.

earth-shattering effect on PC games." This time we're doing it slightly differently, posing the question: how would you like to see things develop over the next ten years? So, chaps?

**Gabe Newell:** "Hopefully *Team Fortress 2* will ship."

Yes, and *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Elite 4*. But seriously...

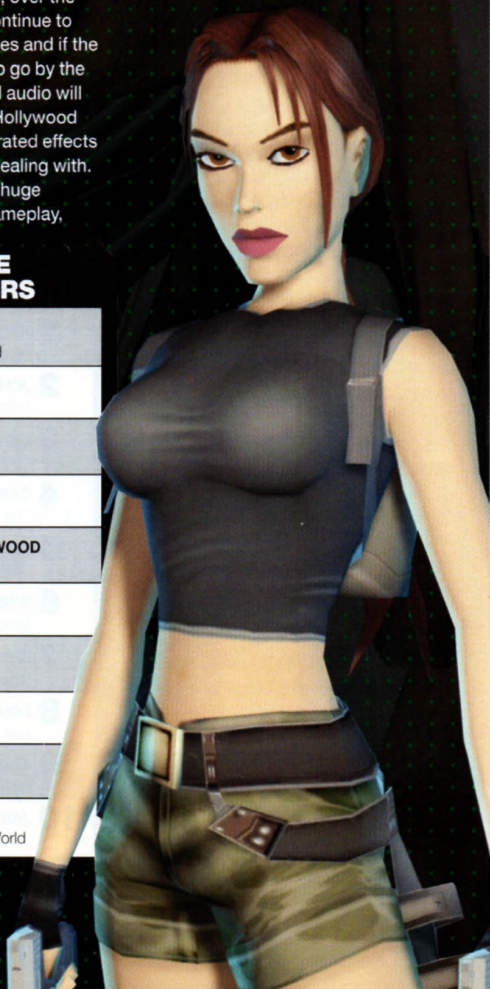
**Peter Molyneux:** "OK, well, over the next ten years the PC will continue to push the boundaries of games and if the last ten years are anything to go by the quality of games visuals and audio will be astounding. Think what Hollywood can do with computer-generated effects – that's the quality we'll be dealing with. The big question is whether huge advances will be made in gameplay,

especially with the vast improvement in AI which I would also expect over this period."

**Warren Spector:** "If we just use future technological advances to make more impressive versions of the games we're already playing, we're in a world of trouble. The games of ten years from

## 10 BEST GAME CHARACTERS

- 1 **SAM & MAX**  
Sam & Max Hit The Road
- 2 **LARA CROFT**  
Tomb Raider series
- 3 **MAX PAYNE**  
Max Payne
- 4 **DUKE NUKEM**  
Duke Nukem series
- 5 **GUYBRUSH THREPEWOOD**  
Monkey Island series
- 6 **JC DENTON**  
Deus Ex
- 7 **THE NAMELESS ONE**  
Planescape Torment
- 8 **SOLID SNAKE**  
Metal Gear Solid
- 9 **MANNY & GLOTTIS**  
Grim Fandango
- 10 **JIMMY WHITE**  
Jimmy White's Cueball World



## DEAD ENDS #2: THE INTERACTIVE MOVIE

HOLLYWOOD AND GAMES  
WALKING HAND-IN-HAND  
INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM!

Flicking back through *PC Zone*'s April 1993 launch issue, you can't help but note the excitement surrounding the rise of multimedia entertainment and the interactive movie. Of course we all know how that genre finished up don't we? It wasn't a bad concept per se, and it could even have revolutionised game development forever by bridging the gap between games and films. But it didn't.

The real problem was with the execution. Too often, games would boast that they were interactive movies, only to end up being tragically poor B-movies that offered little interaction, populated by the dregs of the thespian



*Wing Commander IV* was the last great interactive movie.

world spouting brainless dialogue. Turds such as the *Phantasmagoria* series and *Tender Loving Care* far outnumbered quality attempts to forward the genre, most notably *Wing Commander III* and *IV* and *Privateer 2: The Darkening*. It was only a matter of time till the genre became so tarnished and mocked for its lack of standards that people lost interest and the genre died. May it rest in peace.

**"We have to make games that appeal to older fogies like me and to women and to minorities"**

WARREN SPECTOR ION STORM

## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #6: HALF-LIFE/COUNTER-STRIKE, 1998/99

THE WAR ON TERRORISM IS CEASELESS, UNRELENTING,  
AND RULED BY NIMBLE 14 YEAR OLDS

In 1998, an unknown start-up called Valve Software released a sci-fi shooter called *Half-Life*. It was a busy time for the genre, with titles like *SiN* and *Shogo*: *MAD* also jostling for attention, and most people expected just another generic FPS – new weapons, new aliens, same old trigger-happy action. The fools! As we now recognise, *Half-Life* was ten times more important than any of the other shooters around at the time. Big set-pieces, clever AI and a deep storyline all contributed to an experience that was more immersive, more complete, than any shooter before, or – some would say – since.

It forced every other action game developer to pick up its act and start to think more carefully about scenario construction, pacing, storyline, and the resulting progress is clearly visible in games like *Medal Of Honor*, *No One Lives Forever 2* and *Halo*.

However, it was an unassuming real-world multiplayer mod released the following year that truly cemented the *Half-Life* legend. *Counter-Strike* came along at just the right time – people were starting to tire of repetitive deathmatching, and the simple team-

based formula of CS quickly proved irresistible. As we write this, over 63,000 people are playing CS online – almost four years after it first appeared. The level of success is simply incredible.

After the mod was snapped up and released as an official add-on, CS also created a worrying spate of mod-buying by greedy publishing types looking to replicate its success. It didn't work, but at least the modding community earned a bit of much-deserved respect.



now have to be more interactive, more reactive, more player-driven, less designer-centred. We have to continue to grow beyond our existing genre boundaries – with games that don't involve swords, guns, orcs and gangsters."

**CliffyB:** "We need to analyse and understand the success of titles such as *Roller Coaster*

*Tycoon* and *The Sims* and somehow strike a balance between those titles and the more hardcore titles that we all know and love."

**Warren Spector:** "It would be nice just to see more games that weren't the equivalent of the Hollywood blockbuster





GTA3 showed the way forward for open-ended gameplay and adult content.

## "PC games have always explored the fringes of what games can be and I hope to see this continue"

WILL WRIGHT MAXIS

— all action, violence and bluster... I think we need to make games that are more adult (and by that I do NOT mean games with more T&A, bad language or graphic violence!). We have to make games that appeal to older fogies like me and to women and to minorities."

While that sounds particularly dull, we can concede Warren's point. As much as we like T&A, bad language and graphic violence, there is certainly a need to expand the variety of gaming genres and hence the market for PC games, beyond the core teenage and

20-something audience. In particular we'd like to see some darker, more twisted themes, and a break away from the rigorous realism of most PC gaming universes. How about *Fear And Loathing: The Online RPG*? Perhaps not...

**David Perry:** "I think the one thing I would like to see solved



## PIVOTAL MOMENTS #7: THE SIMS, 2000

THE DAY GROWN MEN PLAYING WITH DOLLIES BECAME SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE...

If ever a lesson was needed as to the folly of trying to predict the future, it happened in 1999. During that year, if you asked any PC user what game they would be playing 12 months hence, they would all give you the same answer — nothing. Because, of course, the Millennium Bug would have destroyed every computer in the world, set off several outdated weapons systems and generally reduced us to the level of grunting, rutting, scavenging beasts. Little did they know, the answer would actually be the popular suburban life simulator, *The Sims*.

Like it or not, we owe a great deal to *The Sims* — now the most successful PC games franchise of all time. Before it took over the world in the year 2000, it was viewed by most as little more than a curiosity, an intriguing side project from the creator of *SimCity*. Certainly no one foresaw the enormous impact it

would have. Most obviously, *The Sims* has, for better or worse, helped pushed gaming into the mainstream. Better yet, its huge community focus has forced publishers to realise that supporting their user-base is just as crucial as creating the game itself. Says Warren Spector: "On an individual, creative level, Will Wright is the PC man of the hour. He's proved that games don't have to be shoot-em-ups to be successful."



*The Sims*: the ultimate fishbowl.

## DEAD ENDS #3: NEW CONTROLLERS AND GAMING DEVICES

WHEN PERIPHERAL MANUFACTURERS TRY TO REINVENT THE WHEEL, AND FAIL. DISMALLY...

We started in 1993 with a mouse and a keyboard or a gamepad and we've ended up in 2003 with a mouse (albeit one that's lost its balls and is the better for it) and a keyboard or a gamepad. In the interim, various eggheads have wiped out millions of pounds

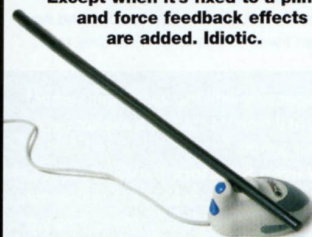
researching the controller that was going to revolutionise the PC, a few of which we've resurrected here. We're not saying all of the following would be better off in a landfill but none of them had any chance of replacing the mouse and keyboard. After all, if it ain't broke...



### Force Feedback Mouse

The whole point of a mouse is that it's free moving giving you easy access to any area of the screen.

Except when it's fixed to a plinth and force feedback effects are added. Idiotic.



### Pool Shark

Do you think that using one of these in your bedroom is going to make you more attractive to the opposite sex? Put it away and go to the pub.



### Saitek PC Dash

Brilliant. Take the standard keyboard, reduce it in size, make it so that the keys don't really work properly and try to sell it in the shops.



### Mouse Phone

Use it as a mouse and pick it up and put it to your ear when someone calls you. You won't look like a twat, honest!

(convincingly) is voice recognition and basic intelligence. There are projects out there where people are trying to document everything a human learns so they can make intelligent decisions. A subset of that for games would be very interesting to play with."

**Will Wright:** "PC games have always explored the fringes of what games can be, and it seems like recent trends indicate a movement to more open-ended, player driven experiences — games that allow players more latitude and creativity in their problem solving. I hope to see this continue."

**Warren Spector:** "Absolutely, we have to focus more on involving and empowering players — that's really our future. It's well past time for developers to accept players as collaborators in the creative process. Player action and interaction is what sets games apart from all other media. Games like *Grand Theft Auto III* and *Thief* and *The Sims* and the *Tony Hawk* series are on the cutting edge of simulation, player empowerment and collaborative creativity and other developers better sit up and take notice or they'll be left behind."

**Randy Pitchford:** "More things, better things, new things. Somewhere along the way new technologies will appear

that will amaze us and make our entertainment more interesting. We're all working on it."

Bring it on lads, bring it on. (Now raise your glasses, and all together... Happy Birthday PC ZONE!) [PZ]

## 10 WORST GAME CHARACTERS

**1 KYLE KATARN**  
Jedi Knight series

**2 JOHN MULLINS**  
Soldier Of Fortune series

**3 LULA**  
Lula series

**4 CAIN**  
Command & Conquer series

**5 FLINTANVIL STEELHEART**  
Litigious EverQuest devotee

**6 BOB**  
Messiah

**7 RAYMAN**  
Rayman series

**8 SQUALL LIONHEART**  
Final Fantasy VIII

**9 ARIAL**  
Baldur's Gate II

**10 JANE**  
Jane's F/A-18





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*Secret Service. In Harm's Way*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Shadow Force: Razor Unit™*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Mafia™*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Neverwinter Nights™*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Grand Theft Auto® III*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Soldier of Fortune® II: Double Helix*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Hitman 2 Silent Assassin™*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Unreal® Tournament 2003*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*

*Star Wars® Jedi Knight® II – Jedi Outcast™*

*Supports Creative EAX ADVANCED HD*



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[www.europe.creative.com/audigy2](http://www.europe.creative.com/audigy2)



# THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD... IN 3D

The outside of your PC might not have changed that much, but inside it's a totally different kettle of fish. Steve Spence provides the dubious analogies

**SINCE THE** dawn of 3D you've been plagued with dreaded upgrades – at least on an annual basis – but it wasn't always this way or this expensive. Back in the days before the 3D accelerator, games might not have looked as good, but as long as you had enough video memory and your processor was quick enough, there was little to worry about, aside from the perils of DOS4GW and over-egging your 40Mb hard drive.

## THE VOODOO COMETH

Without a doubt, one of the most significant events in the development of today's gaming hardware had to be the

arrival of 3DFX's Voodoo 3D accelerator way back in October 1996. Acting as a pass-through card with no 2D capabilities whatsoever, the board sat in a nearby PCI slot to your conventional 2D adapter and kicked in whenever you fired up Glide or OpenGL games.

The reaction was almost instantaneous with gamers clamouring for the 4Mb card which cost anything up to and even over £300. Games which had previously delivered 15fps in 8-bit colour 'chunkovision' were instantly transformed to z-buffered, 16-bit texture filtered goodness at 30fps plus. Visually, the change was astonishing – it's probably fair

to say that this was the biggest step forward to date, although DirectX9 could prove to be the next big milestone.

One year later, though, and technology was already making huge advances. Microsoft launched DirectX5 and chips such as the ATI Rage Pro and NVIDIA Riva 128 became available, both of which offered far superior performance to 3DFX's chip on the Microsoft API. As NVIDIA's first mainstream 3D accelerator (excluding the NV1), this was the first time the company had come toe-to-toe with ATI, a battle still being waged today.

Before either card could really penetrate 3DFX's market dominance,

however, two new chips hit the market in quick succession. First was the Voodoo Rush – an almost abortive attempt at a 2D/3D card utilising 3DFX's original Voodoo with 2D support from Alliance Semiconductor.

Although not a total disaster, the response was far from encouraging, but before that could have any negative effect it was followed up with the Voodoo II. As with the original Voodoo, Voodoo II was a pass-through board, this time with 8Mb or 12Mb depending on model, and it boasted the new feature of Scan Line Interleave – two boards installed in one system, taking it in turns to render alternate lines on the monitor, and pushing relative performance of the time into the stratosphere.

## SCRUNDOWN

Come 1998, and the landscape was getting pretty busy, with new offerings from more companies than ever before (3DFX, ATI, NVIDIA, Intel, S3, Matrox, BitBoys, Number Nine to name but a few), but the actual choice of boards was still quite tough. 3DFX still dominated the frame rates with dual 12Mb Voodoo IIs working in tandem, but its Direct3D support was almost non-existent. To cover both OpenGL and Direct3D bases satisfactorily you needed two cards in your PC. And you think you've got it bad today.




Before 3D accelerators, your games looked like this.



As opposed to this. It was, quite literally, a revolution.

## 3D GRAPHICS: THROUGH THE MISTS OF TIME

THE PC FINALLY WENT 3D IN 1995, HERE'S A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>DX</b>	1	3	5	6
<b>3DFX</b>		Voodoo	Voodoo Rush	Voodoo II Banshee
<b>NVIDIA</b>	NV1		Riva 128	Riva 128 Zx Riva TNT
<b>ATI</b>		3D Rage Rage II	Rage Pro	3D Rage 128
<b>MATROX</b>	Millennium	Mystique	Millennium II Mystique 220	G100 G200
<b>OTHER</b>				Savage 3D



1999 was possibly one of the most significant years since the arrival of the Voodoo, six years ago. DirectX7, the basis for nearly every one of today's games, made its way out into PCs with chips like the TNT2 and Voodoo 3. The new AGP interface got a proper foothold in the market with the first graphics card dubbed a 'GPU' – the Transform-and-Lighting capable GeForce 256. 3D became more competitive than ever, and before the year was out we had news of quicker GPUs and mammoth cards from 3DFX with two or even four chips, promising to push the performance delta further still.

### DEATH OF A TITAN

2000 proved to be disastrous for one of the big three. The relatively poor performance of the Voodoo 3 against chips such as the GeForce 2 GTS and Radeon coupled with the Voodoo 5 launch sliding off towards the tail end of the year saw 3DFX spreading itself far too thin and just before Christmas the unthinkable happened – the company bit the dust. Having been stuck in legal deadlock for some time with NVIDIA it was decided the Santa Clara graphics manufacturer would settle its disputes and absorb the now-defunct graphics company.

Which brings us, almost, to the present day, with DirectX8 – currently the de facto standard for a large proportion of today's games. Support has been available in a number of forms thanks to a swathe of GPUs which have appeared over a period of 18 months, such as the GeForce3, GeForce4 and Radeon 8500.

Essentially four-pipeline DX7 boards with pixel and vertex calculations done on the chips themselves, they enable many of the advanced visual effects seen in 90 per cent of today's games and more importantly the basis for DirectX9. **PC**



## WHIZZIER CHIPS

**INTEL HAS GENERALLY BEEN SEEN AS MAKING PROCESSORS WITH THE MOST OOMPH, BUT IS AMD ABOUT TO TAKE THE TITLE?**

### THE STORY SO FAR...

YEAR	INTEL	AMD
1993	Intel 486 Dx2 80Mhz	-
1994	Intel 486 Dx4 80Mhz	-
1995	Pentium 133Mhz	5x86 133Mhz
1996	Pentium Pro 200Mhz	K5 100Mhz
1997	Pentium II 300Mhz	K6 233Mhz
1998	Pentium II 450Mhz	K6-2 400
1999	Pentium III 700Mhz	Athlon 700Mhz
2000	Pentium III 1133Mhz	Athlon 1200Mhz
2001	Pentium 4 2Ghz	Athlon XP 1900+ (1600Mhz)
2002	Pentium 4 3.06Ghz	Athlon XP 2800+ (2.25Ghz)
2003	Pentium 4 3.06Ghz	Athlon XP 3000+ (2.167Ghz)

**DRAWING OURSELVES** out of the mire of history for a while we decided to take two of the latest processors and stick them in a head-to-head to decide which company, AMD or Intel, provide the biggest bang. Dominance of the high-end of the market regardless of cost is one of the key factors for market dominance. Over the last few years both manufacturers have taken the throne at one point or another, Intel most recently with the arrival of their 3066Mhz Hyperthreading P4, but this month there's a new chip on the block from AMD – the Barton-cored XP 3000+. What's its finishing move? It's raised the L2 cache of the Thoroughbred Athlon XP from 256Kb to 512Kb, and AMD claims this will provide the necessary edge to topple Intel's mighty 3Ghz silicon. We'll see about that.

### HEAD TO HEAD

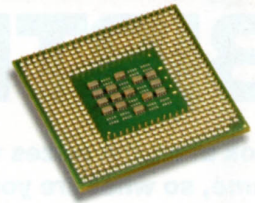
BENCHMARK	TEST	INTEL PENTIUM 4 3.06GHZ HT	ATHLON XP 3000+
SiSoft Sandra	CPU Benchmark (ALU)	9797	8082
	CPU Benchmark (FPU)	2687 and 5699	3281
	Multimedia Benchmark (Integer)	iSSE2 14248	aEMMX 11963
	Multimedia Benchmark (Floating Point)	iSSE2 22459	aSSE 12682
	Memory (Integer)	iSSE2 3390 Mb/sec	eMMX/aSSE 2510 Mb/sec
	Memory (Floating Point)	iSSE2 3390 Mb/sec	eMMX/aSSE 2350 Mb/sec
PC Mark 2002	CPU	7608	6645
	Memory	7848	5733
Comanche 4	640x480x32 (No Sound)	62.6	56.82

### AND THE WINNER ON POINTS IS...

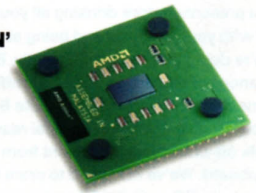
Four months after its launch and Intel's Pentium 4 3.06Ghz is still on top. We're not saying the Barton is slow – this is the closest we've seen any non-overclocked AMD chip get – but it looks like it's going to take a little more before they beat chipzilla.

### PRODUCTS

**PENTIUM  
4 3.06GHZ HT**  
Manufacturer: Intel  
Price: 566.00  
Web: www.intel.com



**ATHLON  
XP 3000+ 'BARTON'**  
Manufacturer: AMD  
Price: 503.00  
Web: www.amd.com



### TEST SYSTEMS

**PENTIUM  
4 3.06GHZ HT**  
ASUS P4GBX  
2x256Mb Corsair P3200  
DIMMS in dual-channel  
configuration  
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro

**ATHLON  
XP 3000+ 'BARTON'**  
ASUS A7N8X  
2x256Mb Corsair P3200 DIMMS  
in dual-channel configuration  
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro

## 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003

7

Voodoo 3 3000

TNT2  
TNT2 Ultra  
GeForce 256



3D Rage 128 Pro

G400

Savage 4  
Savage 2000

8

Voodoo 5 5500  
Voodoo 4 4500

GeForce2GTS  
GeForce2 Ultra

Radeon

G450

Kyro

8.1



GeForce3  
GeForce3 Ti

Radeon 8500

G550

Kyro II

8.1



GeForce4

Radeon 9000  
Radeon 9700 Pro  
Radeon 9700  
Radeon 9500 Pro

Parhelia

9

Geforce FX

Radeon 9900





# THE GREAT 10th BIRTHDAY GIVEAWAY!!

Look at all the prizes we've got on offer, it's like a particularly good episode of the *Generation Game*, so what are you waiting for? If you're not in it, you can't... (Get Out! - ed)

**ONE OF THE BEST** things about a birthday is that all of your friends come round and give you presents before drinking all your wine, trying to get off with your girlfriend and being sick in your stereo. Well we're doing things a bit differently. Because we know the chances of you turning up at our offices bearing fruit is as remote as The Gary Glitter Tribute Band reforming, we thought we'd give you, our loyal readers, the chance to walk off with a special present from ZONE's bulging cupboard. We've managed to cram in a brand new Alienware PC, a digital TV and copy of *X-Men* on DVD, along with a year's supply of games from the lovely people at Sold Out, truckloads of peripherals from Microsoft and a snazzy satellite watch and night vision scope from Electronic Arts. Woo hoo! We're not just

going to hand the stuff out willy-nilly though - you're going to have to work for your corn by answering the following fiendishly hard questions. Haven't got a clue? You might find a couple of clues littered around this month's magazine if you look closely enough...

## QUESTION:

1. Which Zoner famously ate his arse in the magazine?
2. Which ex full-time member of PC ZONE is now plying his trade in the smut industry?
3. What game are we most looking forward to playing in 2003?

The first correct entry out of the hat will win the first prize, the second takes the second prize and so on until all the prizes have been dished out. Just answer the question(s) and send them on a

postcard, along with with all the information requested, to the address below.

- Title, Forename, Surname, Address, Postcode, Daytime phone number and your email address.
- Please indicate on the postcard if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing Ltd.
- Please indicate on the postcard if you are under 18 years old.
- Please indicate on the postcard if you are you a current subscriber.

Send your entry to: 10th Birthday Competition, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD. (Closing date: April 3, 2003)

■ Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!

## FIRST PRIZE: ALIENWARE PC

We love Alienware PCs because they're built by gamers for gamers. You don't have to worry about any of the equipment being substandard - from the optical mouse, down to the keyboard and cards, everything is designed to squeeze every last drop of performance from your favourite games. Alienware offer 24/7 dedicated gaming support as well, so if you can't get a game to work for any reason, you know that specialist help is at hand any time of the day or night. Not only that, the PCs look the business as well and if you're the first correct entry out of the hat you'll get the proof in the shape of this monster system.

## SYSTEM SPECS

Cyborg Green Dragon Full-Tower Case  
AMD Athlon XP Processor 3000+  
ASUS A7N8X Deluxe NVIDIA nForce2 Motherboard  
512Mb DDR SDRAM PC-2700  
140Gb Western Digital hard drive  
16/48x IDE DVD-ROM Drive  
NVIDIA GeForce4 Ti 4800 FE  
Cyborg Green Logitech Internet Keyboard  
Cyborg Green Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer USB 3.0  
Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition

You can find out more about Alienware at [www.alienware.co.uk](http://www.alienware.co.uk) or by calling 0800 279 9751



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# PCZONE (10<sup>th</sup>) Birthday ISSUE

## SECOND PRIZE

### BATTLEFIELD 1942 SATELLITE WATCH PLUS MEDAL OF HONOR NIGHT-VISION SCOPE

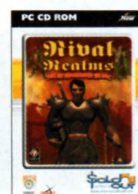
If you're anything like us then you'll probably spend Friday nights down the pub enjoying a light beverage or two. Trouble is, all too soon you can forget where you are, where you live and what your name is. We can't help with the latter, but this *Battlefield 1942* watch comes with a global placement tracker, which means you can pinpoint your position anywhere in the world. Used in conjunction with the *Medal of Honor* night-vision scope, you should be able to navigate your way back, whatever the conditions, and as the global placement tracker also doubles as a timekeeper, you can spend the rest of the night trying to work out why it took you four hours to stagger 200 yards home. Not content with that, though, the kindly folk at EA are also giving away a copy of *Battlefield 1942*, plus the expansion *Road To Rome* and *Medal of Honor: Spearhead*, so you can play out the resulting hangover with two of the best shooters that money can buy.



## THIRD PRIZE

### JVC 28" WIDESCREEN DIGITAL TV AND A COPY OF X-MEN 1.5 ON DVD

Experts tell you that you're supposed to take a 10 minute break from your PC's screen every hour. That's all well and good, but what do they expect you to do in that period of time? Read a book?? Luckily we've got the answer. A brand new 28" TV from JVC complete with the two-disc DVD of the *X-Men*. And when you've finished watching the film and all the extras you can pile into daytime telly and Australian soaps to your heart's content. It's quite literally a fixture that will complement every home. The sequel, *X-Men 2*, is going to hit the cinemas from May 1. Check out the trailer at <http://x2-movie.com>



## FOURTH PRIZE

### WIN A YEAR'S WORTH OF GAMES FROM SOLD OUT SOFTWARE.

What can you get for a fiver these days? (Going on the fact that you've already bought your copy of *PC ZONE*.) A couple of pints of strong lager, a meal-for-one at your local Harvester or a days' driving around Central London? Well you might be surprised to hear that for just five portraits of her majesty you can pick up some of the best games that have ever been released on the PC, ever. If you've checked out our exclusive preview of *Deus Ex 2* (starting on page 30) you'll know that the original was a seminal title in the evolution of the PC. Haven't played it? You're a fool, but you can make up for it by splashing out on your very own copy later this month for a fiver. Can't even stretch that far? How about a first-class stamp? Walk off with the third prize in this compo and you'll get every Sold Out release this year (approximately 60 games) for free. As well as *Deus Ex* your first monthly batch will include *Evolve*, *MDK 2* and *Descent 3*, more than enough to keep you and your PC fully occupied until April's releases. For more information on Sold Out and its spectacularly inexpensive software visit [www.sold-out.co.uk](http://www.sold-out.co.uk)

## FIFTH PRIZE

### MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK 2 JOYSTICKS AND GAME VOICE PERIPHERALS

Microsoft has consistently been praised in the hallowed pages of *ZONE* for providing gamers with the best peripherals money can buy. The latest joystick to spew forth from the mind of Bill Gates is the Force Feedback 2, a stick that rumbles and shakes, as well as providing rock-solid control across your favourite games. The Game Voice is a mic/headphone set that lets you voice your opinions in multiplayer games without having to type your aggression on the keyboard. Plug it in, install the software and you too can scream at people who don't know how to defuse a bomb in *Counter-Strike*. We've got six sets to give away to six extremely lucky readers.



## RUNNERS-UP PRIZES

MEDAL OF HONOR: SPEARHEAD (5 COPIES)  
BATTLEFIELD 1942 AND ROAD TO ROME (5 COPIES OF EACH)  
JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE (5 COPIES)  
X-MEN DVD (10 COPIES)  
JAMES BOND FIGURINES (5)







# THE GREATEST PC GAME IN THE SUPERTEST

It's their toughest assignment yet, as **ZONE** writers past and present gather to discuss the *crème de la crème* from ten years of PC games

**THIS IS IT.** The mother of all Supertests. The most controversial subject yet – the best PC game of the last ten years (give or take).

Supertests are less about picking the best game under discussion and more about

giving the **ZONE** writers the freedom to air their views, no matter how contradictory. And never more so than now.

There are games that aren't here which some panellists (and many of you, probably) thought ought to be included but weren't,

(*Black & White*, the *Ultima* and *Ultima Underworld* series to name but a few) and games that others thought shouldn't be here at all. But, hey, this is not about unanimity. Some of the best art is the most divisive. Thanks to the demented

snowballing progress of technology, a couple of years can seem like aeons when comparing games. That's why we're judging them on how good they were when released, not how each one compares with the latest releases. After

all, film critics wouldn't dismiss Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* just because it was made without sound or even rate the latest Hollywood blockbuster over it just because it has colour and spectacular special effects.





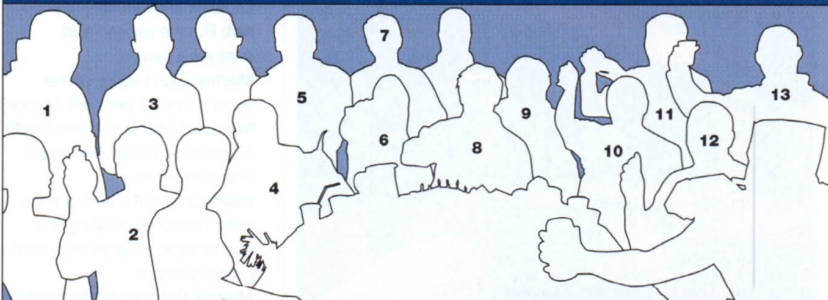


# HISTORY OF THE WORLD, EVER!

## THE CONTENDERS

<b>MONKEY ISLAND 1 &amp; 2</b> 1990-01		<b>QUAKE SERIES</b> 1996-2000	
<b>CIVILIZATION SERIES</b> 1991-2002		<b>GRAND THEFT AUTO SERIES</b> 1997-2002	
<b>SENSIBLE SOCCER</b> 1992-1998		<b>HALF-LIFE</b> 1998	
<b>CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER</b> 1992-2003		<b>PLANESCAPE: TORMENT</b> 1999	
<b>DOOM</b> 1993		<b>DEUS EX</b> 2000	
<b>C&amp;C/RED ALERT</b> 1995-2001		<b>TOTAL WAR SERIES</b> 2000-02	

## THE JURY



1 Charlie 'For One Night Only' Brooker 2 Dave 'The Boss' Woods 3 David 'Fragmeister' McCandless 4 Anthony 'Chicks with Guns' Holden 5 Paul 'Launcher' Lakin 6 Rhianna 'Build And Rush' Pratchett 7 Paul 'Ever-Present' Presley 8 Steve '4-4-2' Hill 9 Richie 'Retro' Shoemaker 10 Martin 'The Butcher' Korda 11 Mark 'The Puppet Master' Hill 12 Jamie 'Frequently Angry' Sefton 13 Keith 'The Putter' Pullin



## IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS DOOM

**Paul L:** *Doom* was much more important than *Quake*. There was so much excitement when it came out. I remember holding an issue of *ZONE* until the last possible moment to get the demo on the cover disc. And, unlike others such as *7th Guest*, it lived up to the anticipation.

**Dave:** Where did all the anticipation come from?

**Paul L:** It was because *Wolfenstein 3D* had become so popular.

**Macca:** There was a beta version of *Doom* floating around too.

**Mark:** Did it have anything to do with it being multiplayer?

**Macca:** We didn't know it was multiplayer until the full version came out. It was a combination of everything. It was science fiction, horror, shooting, 3D, fast moving, multiplayer...

**Dave:** And people would still play it now.

**Macca:** No, they wouldn't. It's shit now.

**Martin:** It had a really long-lasting appeal for a lot of people though, because even when you'd finished the single-player game you could play it online. That's what made it so great.

That hadn't happened before.

**Macca:** More than that it was the atmosphere.

**Dave:** It was very scary.

**Martin:** It was one of the first games to use sound effects really well.

**Mark:** I went around for weeks making those grunting noises that scared me witless.

**Rhianna:** I was more into *Wolfenstein 3D*. I got more absorbed in that than *Doom*, it had a more interesting setting.

**Macca:** *Ultima Underworld* came out before *Doom* and it had a far better engine and was far more exciting as a game. In a way, *Doom* corrupted the games industry. A lot of gaming is dominated by shooters, which are moronic, repetitive and haven't really moved on.

**Prez:** *Doom* is definitely responsible for dumbing down games.

**Anthony:** But if you put all the enjoyment that the people in this room have had from games it's probably shooters that come out on top.

**Mark:** And *Doom* was the first time games got proper media attention. There were stories in all the newspapers, mostly because of people playing on office networks.

**Steve:** There still are. Whenever a kid kills someone it's *Doom*'s fault. It's probably true. But who cares? At least they always get a headshot, so there's no painful injuries.

**Richie:** You can put a good story into a shooter these days though.

## DOOM

id Software



It might look like pixelated hell now, but for most people the first *Doom* was a revelation.

Creating a buzz akin to a new Beatles album, *Doom* completely transformed the games industry when it appeared in 1993. It was immersive and very scary, and it turned first-person shooters into the most popular

PC genre by far. It was also responsible for creating the deathmatch. There were a few sequels, but none matched the impact of the first. The third looks spectacular, but will the ten year-old gameplay be revitalised?

**Macca:** But they haven't evolved that much. *Half-Life* is the only one that has done something exceptional with the genre since *Doom*.

**Mark:** The progress seemed to stop after *Half-Life*, it just stalled.

**Macca:** That's because it was an absolute fluke. Maybe even Valve won't be able to match it. They seem to have difficult second album syndrome.

## AND THEN CAME QUAKE

**Prez:** There's been technological advances each time, but with the *Quake* series there's no fundamental shift in gameplay.

**Mark:** There's definitely an aesthetic move from the cold colours of *Doom* to the deep browns of *Quake*.

**Keith:** It was one of the first games that made you want to upgrade your PC just to play it.

**Richie:** So did *Wing Commander*. The first *Quake* was bollocks.

**Ant:** But the second and third were genius.

**Martin:** Didn't you give the second one 97 per cent, Macca?

**Macca:** At the time it was worth 97 per cent, but a year later it was shitehouse.

**Dave:** *Quake III* was a definite shift. Their way of taking the deathmatch as far as they could possibly take it.

**Macca:** But now deathmatch is dying, it's nowhere near as popular as it used to be.

**Dave:** We still play it. Hate it too, you get so angry you

**"Keith and I both lost our jobs because of it, we just played it all day. But it was worth every minute"**

STEVE HILL  
ON HIS LOVE FOR SENSIBLE SOCCER

want to kill someone.

**Macca:** But there's a very good reason why *Counter-Strike* is the most popular online shooter: it's better than anything else.

**Martin:** But *Quake III* can send you into fits of rage if you lose and makes you elated if you win.

**Macca:** I get that from *Counter-Strike* though, the full spectrum of emotions.

**Martin:** The difference is that in *Quake* you work as an individual, in CS you work in a team.

**Macca:** Deathmatch is a cul-de-sac, team play is much more interesting. All great sports are one team against another.

**Dave:** Exactly, there's no point in watching tennis.

**Ant:** So you're saying that *Quake III* is tennis and *Counter-Strike* is football?

**Macca:** I didn't say that.

**Charlie:** Which is the game equivalent of lacrosse then?

**Mark:** It's the reason *UT2003* hasn't really taken off. It's moved closer to *Quake* than CS.

**Macca:** But you always get a new wave of kids every year who haven't played *Doom* or *Quake*, and they'll think it's great.

**Keith:** It's like the biggest selling toy this Christmas was

the spinning top.

**Prez:** The problem is that most developers are one-hit wonders, but they don't realise it and try to do other things. But once they've done their one big idea, they're screwed. There are very few people in the industry who have more than one good idea.

## FOOTBALL CRAZY

**Steve:** Keith and I both lost our jobs because of *Sensible Soccer*. We just played it all day. But it was worth every minute.

**Paul L:** But whenever we used to play it in the *ZONE* office we'd go to a couple of old Amigas that were lying around.

**Steve:** But the 96/97 version, which is on PC, is probably the definitive one. *Sensi* was the *Pro Evolution* of its day. It was the first game to have black players in it.

**Keith:** You could recognise the players by the way they played.

**Charlie:** What are you talking about? You were hallucinating. My problem with football games is I can't make the leap of imagination that says I'm enjoying them.

**Steve:** What is there to imagine? It's all there.

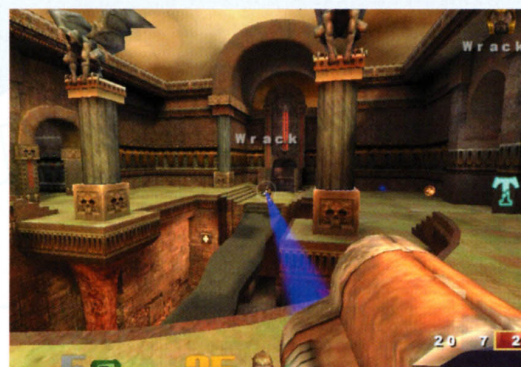
## QUAKE

id Software

Swapping *Doom*'s steely hues for earthy reds and browns, id managed to create another blockbuster, even if the gameplay didn't offer anything different to *Doom*. The sequel's single-player was instantly forgettable, but its online mode coincided with the popularisation of home Internet access and was a massive hit. The third seemed to take deathmatch as far as it could go, so we can't wait to see how things develop in *Quake IV*.



If you like brown, you'll feel right at home in *Quake*.



Has *Counter-Strike* killed off the *Quake* deathmatch?



**Charlie:** You're deluded. You can't tell one bunch of pixels from another. If you saw someone who looked like a *Sensi* player walking down the street, you'd drop to your knees and cry. And you know it.

**Steve:** It's still brilliant. I recently did a Games That Changed The World feature and played an entire season.

**Dave:** Bar *Doom* I've spent more time playing *Sensible Soccer* than any other game.

**Keith:** It's always remembered fondly by everyone who played it.

**Charlie:** That doesn't make it the greatest game of all f\*\*\*\*g time, though, does it?

**Steve:** I think it may well be.

**Prez:** But would you pick this or *Champ Man*?

**Steve:** *Champ Man*, because after a while your thumbs would just go playing *Sensi*. You can really mess them up.

**Charlie:** *Champ Man*. That really is for demented idiots. It's completely pointless. Like masturbating over *Heat* magazine.

**Keith:** But you don't like football, so you're not gonna like a football game, are you?

**Charlie:** In what way is this a football game? It's just numbers and names. It's a tedium simulator. A very accurate one at that.

**Jamie:** I love football, but I can't get my head round *Champ Man* at all.

**Charlie:** You don't need a computer to play it, just use a piece of paper.

**Steve:** You could say that about role-playing games. *Champ Man* is like having a job, but one that you like. Every day you go into work but you enjoy it.

**Dave:** It's dangerous. It takes way too long to play.

**Steve:** I kept the same game running for 18 months once.

**Martin:** It must be good for people to keep playing for that long.

**Dave:** Yeah, but my brother can't stop playing even when he isn't enjoying it anymore.

**Mark:** That's what happens. At first it's like having a job you like, but after a few weeks it's a job you hate. But you still can't keep yourself from going into the office every day.

**Steve:** There is a fair share of frustration and despair.

**Dave:** I've only ever broken one CD and that's a *Champ Man* one, after I got Coventry relegated twice in a row.

**Martin:** Would you play if it was *American Football Manager*?

**Mark:** Of course not.

The reason

it's so great is

that it recreates the real football world so well.

You actually believe these are the real world players you're managing and trying to buy.

**Paul L:** It's so basic in

terms

of graphics and yet it is so addictive even if you're only mildly interested in football. When it first came out there were all these flashier management games, with great graphics and soap opera elements. *Champ Man* was just stats, but it's the one that's lasted.

**Prez:** That's what people want – stats.

**Macca:** That's what RPGs are really.

**Mark:** It is an RPG in a way.

**Steve:** Absolutely. I've taken Chester to Europe, finished second in the Premiership.

**Dave:** If all the stats are completely accurate and you've got the same money Chester had, how can that be realistic? **Steve:** It's because I'm a brilliant manager. If I took over Chester for real now, the same thing would happen.

## WESTWOOD'S RESOURCES

**Rhianna:** Like *Wolfenstein* before *Doom*, it was *Dune 2* that kicked off the whole RTS thing.

**Dave:** There's no game in *Command & Conquer*. I finished it without actually doing anything.

**Martin:** There's no strategy. You just build up a huge force and run over the opposition.

**Rhianna:** The first *Dune* was more of an adventure game, but it probably had more strategic elements than all the games that came after it.

**Prez:** None of these games have any strategy, that's a misnomer. They're puzzle games. You find the one route through and complete the mission.

**Richie:** You don't judge a game on how good it is at turning you into Saddam Hussein or whatever...

**Charlie:** You would if it did literally.

**Richie:** It's about how much

## SENSIBLE SOCCER

SENSIBLE SOFTWARE



Apparently you can recognise players by their playing style. Yeah, right.

The men were tiny and the view was aerial, but that didn't stop *Sensi* feeling more like football than any other game since (bar a certain PS2 exception). Because the players are so small you get the real scope of a proper football ground rather than the closed-in, pared-down versions of most 3D games. And if playing against someone else wasn't enough to suck all your time, there was a fantastic career mode with a good management side to it. Keep your *Kick Offs* and your *FIFAs*, thank you very much.

fun it is. And C&C was always great fun.

**Martin:** The first time it was, but after that it was all the same.

**Mark:** I didn't even find it fun the first time. It bored me stiff, like all other so-called RTS games.

**Richie:** The best one they've done recently was *Red Alert 2*, but there's no real progress.

**Rhianna:** I'm playing *Generals* at the moment and, though it doesn't really change from the usual C&C game, it's tremendous fun. That's what Westwood does so well, they understand what gamers want.

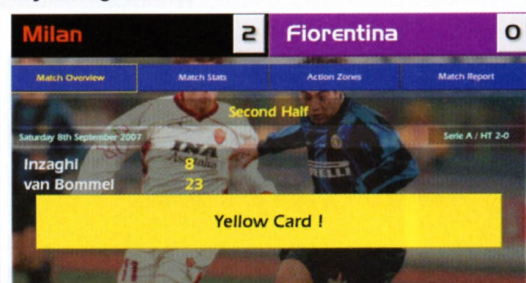
**Mark:** They're a bit like Blizzard in that way. Not a single original idea, but they're great at pleasing their target audience.

## CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

SPORTS INTERACTIVE

Trns	Staf	Leag	Fixt	Accs
ATKINS S	DM C	G	O'DRISCOLL K	A R
ATKINSON C	G		PASKIN S	D C
BUTTERS L	MA C		ROCASTLE I	MA
CAREY M	DM R		ROSENIOR S	D C
CULVERHOUSE B	D R		SHIRTLIFF S	A R
DORIGO R	D R		STEIN M	M C
EVANS N	A LC		STUART D	MA
EVANS K	G		WICKERS J	MA
HOLDEN G	MA C		YATES S	D C
JOSEPH A	D R			
LEE G	M LC			
MILLS S	MA RLC			
NELSON S	MA C			
1	02	03	04	05
GOAL	DISP	AV R	PREV	TACT

**Champ Man:** responsible for more lost man hours than any other game ever.



Other games had better presentation, but the original *Champ Man* was already a box-office winner.

The series has come a long way since the bedroom programming days of 1992's original outing, and the series has become an international success with a fiercely loyal (and addicted) fanbase. Thanks to continuous updates, it has never been far from the charts, although there have only been four proper incarnations including the imminent fourth one. Slammed by some for its stark, graphicless and stat-heavy approach, it recreates football so faithfully the rest of us don't really care.

## COMMAND & CONQUER/ RED ALERT

WESTWOOD

*Dune 2* might have started it all, but it was C&C in 1995 that exploded the RTS into a phenomenon to rival first-person shooters. *Red Alert* a year later was an even bigger success thanks to changing the sci-fi plot into a mock-historical setting. *Tiberian Sun* was more of the same, making people realise Westwood had no new ideas. *Battle For Dune*, *Red Alert 2* and *Generals* just prove them right.



You won't find many new ideas in the sequels, but it's still a lot of fun.



## CIVILIZATION

### MICROPROSE/FIRAXIS



Civ hasn't been the same since Sid Meier left.

Building your own society from 4000BC to the space age is quite an ambitious enterprise, even if it is turn-based, and when the first *Civ* appeared in 1991, it created an instant fanatic fanbase. You could say it peaked with *Civ II* (1996) and has been going downhill ever since. It's no coincidence that *Civ II* was the last one designed by Sid Meier himself. He has since gone on to make *SimGolf*, suggesting his best is way behind him.

### HISTORY LESSONS

**Richie:** I'd rather play the original *Civilization* than any of the recent ones.

**Keith:** Me too. It was just so quick and simple. It cuts all the crap out and gets down to the basic strategy game.

**Mark:** I loved *Civ II* and played it for ages. But once I'd taken my society as far as it could go, winning the space race and everything, I had no desire to play it or any of the sequels ever again. They could have done so much more with it, but it's basically the same game for newer machines now.

**Richie:** The first *Civ* was like the strategy version of *Space Invaders*. Simple but amazing.

**Keith:** It turned quite a boring subject matter into something not quite as boring.

**Mark:** You're saying building your own civilisation and taking over the world is a boring concept?

**Keith:** It's basically a history lesson, but with an interesting history teacher.

**Charlie:** But you could play as the Ancient Egyptians and develop nuclear weapons if you were good at it. In what way is that a history lesson?

**Keith:** Hmmm. You're right. It's just a game.

**Charlie:** They're never going to use it in schools.

**Richie:** And it's not as good as *Survival* on the Spectrum.

**Dave:** Oh, here we go...

**Mark:** What about *Age Of Empires*?

**Dave:** Muck.

**Rhianna:** It contributed the idea of balancing resources. In *C&C* you only had one or two.

**Charlie:** But you have to manage enough resources in life – I still can't manage it – to want to do it in a game too.

**Keith:** Yeah, I always have too much wood I find.

**Paul L:** I'm not sure *Age Of Empires* is much of a progression on earlier games, it's just a very addictive and good version of a certain type.

### WELCOME TO THE BLACK MESA

**Macca:** *Half-Life* is a product of its genre, but it's still astonishing. When you played it you were surprised and amazed at how brilliant it was.

**Dave:** I think people do talk it up a lot. *Half-Life* is a great game, but it wasn't as innovative as everyone makes out.

**Richie:** But it did add narrative and story and pace. It doesn't just take things from other games, it take from movies too.

**Mark:** It doesn't matter really where it all came from, it's how it puts it all together that matters.

**Macca:** The characters were funny, the dialogue was good...

**Steve:** Was it?

**Macca:** OK, it wasn't genius, but it wasn't that robotic kind of nonsense you get in most games.

**Steve:** Yeah. For all that I was still glad when I finished it.

**Charlie:** Bouncing around a stupid alien world...

**Macca:** The Xen levels weren't that bad. They weren't great but they weren't rubbish.

**Paul L:** And we can't talk about *Half-Life* without mentioning *Counter-Strike*.

**Macca:** There's hardly any point to playing it online now though. You get raped the minute you log in. I was the best when I started playing it...

**Steve:** Even if you do say so yourself.

**Macca:** But last time I played, it was really stressful. I just kept getting killed all the time. The untold story is that the game is riddled with cheats. Everyone cheats.

**Mark:** I can understand certain dickheads going on now and again to cheat and spoil it for everyone else, but what kind of person goes on every day and cheats? It doesn't make sense. **Charlie:** Thank god they're doing that rather than running round high schools killing "real" kids.

**Macca:** But if we're searching for some criteria to distinguish the games we're talking about, like astonishment, amazement, whatever, *Half-Life* made me drop everything and want to play it the moment I saw it.

**Jamie:** There's so many brilliant gaming moments in there.

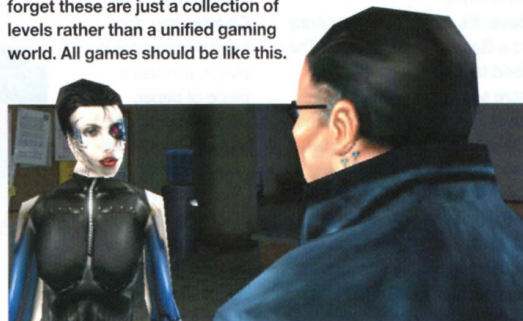
### DAY OF SEX

**Prez:** What the PC does best is first-person shooters with proper narratives, like *Deus Ex*. I probably didn't get far enough,

## DEUS EX

### ION STORM

Setting out to give the player complete freedom in how to develop your character, how you approach each level and how you progress through the story, *Deus Ex* shows just what games are capable of. There is so much depth and detail you can forget these are just a collection of levels rather than a unified gaming world. All games should be like this.



The story is complex and well told, but a bit hackneyed.



There is no world more detailed and immersive than this.

but how good is the story compared to a novel say?

**Mark:** Rubbish. It just rehashes a lot of old sci-fi, conspiracy nonsense.

**Richie:** It shows what the state of game stories are when even the best aren't great.

**Charlie:** Ah, but have you played

Graham Greene's *The End Of The Affair* on Xbox?

**Ant:** It's unfair to compare game stories to novels, they're closer to films.

**Martin:** But in a game you can do more than a story, you can branch it different ways.

**Mark:** But the great thing

## HALF-LIFE

### VALVE



Others have improved graphics and AI, but not much touches *Half-Life*.

Valve took a well-used genre and transformed it into a work of art, despite providing very little story and piling on the action. No one can forget the moment you got sucked in by simply arriving at work for the first 30 minutes of gameplay, and there are more surprises and wow-moments than in any other game. Still unsurpassed as a complete shooting experience.



## "The GTA games are like brilliantly designed toys. You get this sense of freedom and you can go around achieving all kinds of horrendous anarchy"

**CHARLIE BROOKER**  
ON THE JOY OF GTA

about *Deus Ex* isn't the story. It creates a whole world that you can explore. It's so rich and full of detail – you can find terminals and newspapers that give you loads of background if you want it and make you believe in it. The story is just something that happens within that world.

**Jamie:** And in *Half-Life* when you kill people there are no real consequences. In *Deus Ex* if you shoot certain characters it affects the story.

**Charlie:** Because their children won't talk to you?

**Prez:** I'd like to see a shooter where after you've killed someone you're introduced to his family, all of them crying.

**Mark:** The decisions you make in *Deus Ex* do affect the outcome. There are three different endings.

**Dave:** But what happens if you get the shit one?

**Macca:** There's no point to multiple endings.

**Keith:** The good thing about *Deus Ex* is that you're always under the illusion that whatever you do matters, that there are infinite endings. It's actually quite limited and restricted but it doesn't feel that way.

**Mark:** But the point is that you

don't even notice the paths you choose. You're not made to go down one path, you're free to do what you want.

**Paul L:** While *Half-Life*, great though it is, is very linear.

**Charlie:** I find it more exciting to come across a bit of scripted action. The best stories are the ones that have been planned out. I mean *The Warlock Of Firetop Mountain* may have been groundbreaking, but it's no *End Of The Affair* by Graham Greene.

### PUZZLED MONKEYS

**Mark:** If we're talking stories we should discuss adventure games. And the best is *Monkey Island*.

**Keith:** No, it's not, it's *Grim Fandango*.

**Mark:** The thing with the first two *Monkey Island* games is that, even though they're the oldest ones here, they're still very playable and very funny.

**Charlie:** I always loved adventure games but I always wanted them to be easier. I hated getting stuck. They were

## 10 TOP 10 SUPERTEST IMAGES

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE ZONE TEAM WOULD DRESS UP IN STUPID COSTUMES FOR SUPERTESTS. HERE WE REMIND YOU OF TEN OF THE BEST



**1 ROLE PLAYING GAMES**

Issue: 95



**2 STAR TREK**

Issue: 97



**3 GOLF**

Issue: 99



**4 REAL-TIME STRATEGY**

Issue: 83



**5 GOD GAMES**

Issue: 105



**6 FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER MODS**

Issue: 94



**7 SCARY GAMES**

Issue: 90



**8 RALLY GAMES**

Issue: 101



**9 STEALTH GAMES**

Issue: 103



**10 SINGLE-PLAYER FPS**

Issue: 104

## MONKEY ISLAND

LUCASARTS



*Monkey Island* is so good you hardly notice how ancient it looks now.

It's amazing to think that *The Secret Of Monkey Island* was released way back in 1990, with the sequel *LeChuck's Revenge* coming just a year later. The third game stank and the fourth was just good, but it was tough to pick a representative from all the great LucasArts adventures. *Day Of The Tentacle*, *Sam & Max*, *Grim Fandango* are all fantastic classics, but Guybrush Threepwood's original adventures are still the best.



funny but it was so irritating that you always ended up trying to figure out a contrived puzzle.

**Mark:** Basically, you need a walkthrough to play them.

**Macca:** But there's something to be said about the death of puzzles in games. The puzzles you get now are so pathetic, it's a joke. I know what Charlie means about the more extreme ones where the logic is so twisted it doesn't make sense. But now you get three buttons, one shaped like a jewel, one like a square and one like a circle, and there's a circle on the door of the room you want to go into...

**Prez:** *Monkey Island* was guilty of really abstract puzzles, but at least you had a laugh while you were doing it.

**Paul L:** It brought a lot of people to gaming who weren't interested before.

**Macca:** Girls you mean. What's the point of standing there trying every single thing in your inventory with everything you can see to solve a puzzle?

**Mark:** *Monkey Island* is nowhere near as frustrating as other adventure games.

**Prez:** It had really good puzzles, like how to work out the punchlines to jokes.

**Mark:** Pure genius.

**Steve:** Everyone talks about the humour, but it's only game humour, not laugh-out-loud funny.

**Prez:** It is though.

**Mark:** It's hilarious in places. Though *Sam & Max* was probably funnier.

**Steve:** Yeah, but when people talk about the funniest things ever they don't mention this. You don't get people on *Love the 90s* going "Oh, that *Monkey Island*..."

## GRAND TOTAL ANARCHY

**Charlie:** But what's the funniest game ever made? It's probably something like *GTA*.

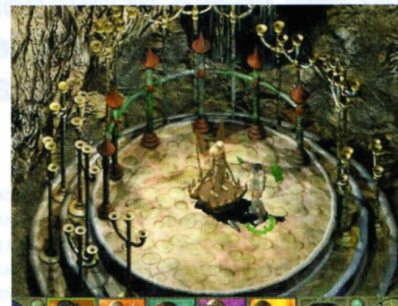
**Keith:** The first time I got hold of the flamethrower in *GTA III* it was one of the funniest moments in my life.

**Mark:** The aiming worked so much better on PC. But for driving you need a gamepad, which can be a bit awkward when you've been running around with a mouse.

**Charlie:** It's like being in a one-man band. The *GTA* games are like brilliantly designed toys though. You get this sense of freedom and you can go around achieving all kinds of horrendous anarchy.

## PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS



An incredible detailed world and superb character development await if you persevere.

Probably the most overlooked game of the past ten years and dismissed by many as more *Baldur's Gate* bearded nonsense, this is actually a sublime RPG full of strange twists and turns. You can make your character into anything you want – both class and personality-wise – and there are loads of great characters, who wouldn't be out of place in a *David Lynch* movie. There's too much text for some, but at least it's well written.

**Mark:** Unlike other games here, it isn't about being frustrated but still enjoying it, it's just endless uproarious fun.

**Dave:** There's missions but you don't really need them. It's great just driving around.

**Jamie:** I remember beating some guy with a baseball bat at night, and the sun came up and I was still beating him.

**Mark:** Beautiful, man.

**Charlie:** In *Vice City* you can

recreate the killings of the Yorkshire Ripper, picking up prostitutes and killing them with a screwdriver. Of course, you have to find a lorry and think you're God...

**Keith:** *GTA III* mixes linear and non-linear gameplay and does it superbly. It's like *Mario*, with lots of little secrets all over.

**Mark:** The first game was brilliant too, basically a 2D overhead version of the third one.

**Jamie:** The weird thing is that the first one was in the *Daily Mail* for being too violent, and there's nothing about the third one, which is far worse.

**Mark:** I remember they even discussed *GTA* on *Newsnight*.

**Ant:** It was the running over of Hare Krishnas in the first one that did it.

**Mark:** Such a shame they got rid of that. It was so funny, and you got a bonus if you killed them all in one go. How could anyone watching them running around

on fire with their cymbals in the air not be amused?

**Dave:** Why does everyone aspire to kill someone else?

**Mark:** It's only like when you're a kid running around with a toy gun.

**Dave:** Yeah, but why is that?

**Prez:** If you can't shag it or screw it, you want to kill it.

**Charlie:** Shag it or screw it? You mean if it's not a sexual object or a piece of flat-packed furniture?

## BEARD VERSUS WEIRD

**Dave:** I don't think we should talk about *Planescape: Torment* since it's obviously not one of the best PC games ever made.

**Mark:** Yes, it is!

**Dave:** There's far too much dialogue. You don't want to read it all.

**Mark:** But it's actually rather well written. And very funny in parts.

**Rhianna:** It's got the best storyline of any of the games here.

**Martin:** But just a story doesn't

## GRAND THEFT AUTO

ROCKSTAR

It all started on the PC in 1997, but it was its release on PlayStation that turned it into a worldwide phenomenon, with lots of merchandise, advertising and media coverage. The 2D view was loveable, even if it looks quaint compared to the third's marvellous three-dimensionality. The second in the series was a largely forgettable affair set in a darker, futuristic version of Liberty City. Probably the most fun you can have on a PC.



Who could have imagined they would ever manage to recreate the whole thing in 3D?



## THE VERDICT



**DAVE**  
Doom  
Deus Ex



**ANT**  
Doom  
Quake series



**JAMIE**  
Half-Life  
GTA Series



**MARTIN**  
Total War  
Half-Life



**RHIANNA**  
C&C/Red Alert  
Planescape



**RICHIE**  
Half-Life  
Total War Series



make a great game.

**Mark:** It isn't just that. It's an incredibly deep and involving RPG, with hundreds of quests, lots of freedom and the best character development ever devised.

**Steve:** It's still about bloody wizards.

**Mark:** Only in part. It's a fantasy world, but not of the clichéd Tolkien kind, with elves, trolls and pointy hats and stuff. It's actually quite a weird fantasy world, some really twisted stuff, more Clive Barker than Tolkien.

**Rhianna:** It's so different because it's based on the *Forgotten Realms* novels.

**Mark:** Don't mention that!

**Macca:** Oh, you had us for a moment but you've lost us again with that.

**Keith:** There is loads of text, but it's like reading a good book.

**Charlie:** Was it as good as *The End Of The Affair* by Graham Greene?

**Macca:** Oh, shut up about that!

**Charlie:** Sorry, it's not even that good a book. There's a load of boring religious bollocks in it.

#### TOTAL STRATEGY

**Martin:** *Shogun* was the game I'd been wanting to play for

about 11 years, and someone finally made it.

**Dave:** It's basic though. You're on a hill and you kill everyone.

**Richie:** Dave, shut up, you just don't understand.

**Martin:** It actually requires real strategy rather than just hoping to outnumber your opponents.

**Keith:** What I loved is that you can skip the battles and just get on with the assassin cut-scenes and the *Risk* part of the game.

**Paul L:** It's the huge battles that make the game though.

**Martin:** It's the atmosphere, the music, the sound effects, the scope of the battles, the weather effects... When you see the enemy troops appear through the fog, you feel you're there with them. And you can pause it, move the camera around. You can make it pretty simple or really hardcore.

**Prez:** There aren't many games that give you such massive battles with so many troops. None of this stupid resource gathering either. You've got thousands of troops, so has your enemy, and it's up to you how you take them out. That's proper strategy.

**Mark:** This is probably the only RTS I've ever enjoyed. [X]

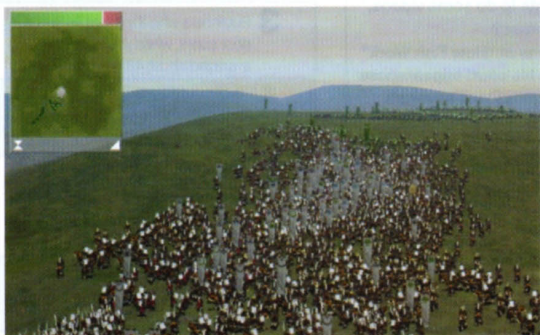
## AND THE WINNER IS... DOOM



## TOTAL WAR

### CREATIVE ASSEMBLY

Finally putting the strategy into the RTS, *Shogun: Total War* was an amazing example of massive battles in a 3D environment that doesn't confuse thanks to a highly polished interface and general spotless design. The *Risk* elements give it depth, even if the sequel *Medieval* failed to provide anything new other than the different historical setting. The next in the series, *Rome*, looks so good it defies belief.



Finally, *Shogun* showed what true strategy should be like.

### BUT IT'S CLOSER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

With so many people voting and with so many disparate games to choose from, we weren't expecting an unanimous decision. Which is just as well. You might have expected to see *Half-Life* at the top, but it was pipped at the post by the original *Doom*. "I'd still play it now, not just for nostalgia," says Dave. While Charlie says: "it was the first game to really frighten me".

*Deus Ex* and *Total War* were the next closest. "I love a lot of the games here," says Mark, "but *Deus Ex* combines a lot of different things: action, freedom, atmosphere and some of the best design ever," he adds. "*Deus Ex* really does have everything. It has story, strategy and role-playing elements, and it combines them all really well," agrees Paul Presley. While Martin says of *Total War*: "it's truly the most amazing strategy game ever with an unparalleled atmosphere".

*Half-Life* had to settle for a very close second, with Jamie clamouring: "it just totally blew me away, even more so than *Doom*." Richie agrees: "it had a great impact and it's just amazing." While Macca adds: it's the best "because of all the add-ons as well as the utterly brilliant single-player game."



**MARK**  
Deus Ex  
Half-Life



**STEVE**  
Champ Man  
Sensible Soccer



**PREZ**  
Deus Ex  
Total War Series



**MACCA**  
Half-Life  
Doom



**KEITH**  
GTA Series  
Sensible Soccer



**CHARLIE**  
Doom  
Half-Life



**PAUL L**  
Doom  
Total War Series



# PCZONE TEN YEARS AT THE TOP

A decade of doing what we do best. A decade of the highest professional standards. A decade of excellence and integrity. **Paul Presley** looks back at how **PC ZONE's** finest qualities have been displayed over the years and digs up some memorable moments...

## TASTE AND DECENCY

### ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. UNFORTUNATELY...

Charlton Brooker. Although he spends these days entertaining the readers of *The Guardian Guide's* TV section, writing sitcoms with Chris Morris and generally turning into Christopher Walken (check the photos in this month's Supertest), there was a time when he was synonymous with **ZONE**. Sometimes, for all the wrong reasons.

Aside from references to necrophilia in *Tomb Raider* reviews, pictures of his arse smeared with ketchup and the funniest prank calls ever recorded (you

can hear them on the bonus DVD), the moment that will shadow him to his grave is *Cruelty Zoo*.

Originally a joke about Lara Croft's homicidal tendencies towards animals, the **ZONE** lawyers failed to notice the fact that it was filled with pictures of kids mutilating chimps.

Unfortunately, WH Smith did notice. So did Woolworths. Then the tabloids. We were pulled off the shelves in an instant. Making issue 60 something of a collector's edition.



Kids mutilating chimps is liable to get your magazine pulled from shelves.

## COVER HITS

### THE GOOD, THE BAD, BUT MAINLY THE UGLY...

We may not know much about art, but we know what we like. Unfortunately, we never seem to get an art editor that feels the same way (sorry Phil). The business of covers is a tricky one at best - limited space due to coverdiscs, dodgy game art, etc - but it's fair to say that we've taken the notion of offensive cover imagery to ever higher (or lower) extremes.

Alongside such horrors as luminescent green handprints and image-less shiny gold covers (oddly one of our best sellers ever), the top prizes for atrocities to grace our covers surely have to go to issues 26 and 58.

As you can see, the latter takes the notion of 'white space' to new limits, but it's the unhappy marriage of ugly pink blobby thing leering over slightly less ugly pink blobby bikini woman that rates as the worst thing ever to assault your eyes.



Would you buy a magazine with a cover like this?

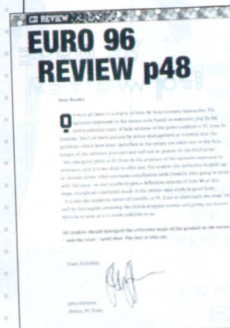
## JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY

### YOU HAVE TO GET UP PRETTY EARLY IN THE MORNING TO CATCH US OUT...

"We don't review unfinished games." Course not. No magazine does because we have to rely on publishers to supply us code, and they're not in the habit of signing off games that aren't going to show their titles off in the best light. Or at least that's the theory - trouble is we have to rely on publishers to fulfil their side of the deal.

So, enter issue 39 when we apparently reviewed an unfinished version of *Euro 96* - the *ISS Pro Evo/FIFA* of its day. As scrupulously honest as ever, we slagged it off (well, gave it 70 per cent which in those days was as good as). And then Gremlin found out, harassing then editor John Davison with claims of code still being worked on and bugs being ironed out.

Maybe we were young. Maybe innocent. Maybe just drunk. But we believed them. Hence a full page 'letter' hastily slipped inside our front cover telling our readers to ignore the review on pages 48-51. Of course the game never changed one whit on release and we fell for the PR scheme hook, line and sinker. A re-review is still waiting to appear.



## CHIN PISTONS

### "ALRIGHT, CULKUS 'ERE, ISN'T IT?"

There was a time when we stretched the concept of being a magazine about computer games to the limit. One of our top draws used to be Mr Cursor (who's back this month for an update!). So when he rang up and said, "I've got a mate who wants to do some videos," how could we refuse?

What diagrams of "How Fish Work" and letters from his court appearances had to do with games was anyone's guess, but when he was on track he was very on track indeed. Wandering around ECTS trying to sell his art, harassing developers as BlokeBird and, his *pièce de résistance*, attacking EA with his 'tank'.

Modifying a clapped-out old banger to fire missiles at the corporate behemoths' HQ (below) was a work of genius and justified our faith in him all along. How we weren't sued for damages is a mystery. You can see the amazing footage on our bonus DVD.



## 10 ANNOYING THINGS

### MAKING ZONE'S NOT ALL A BARREL OF LAUGHS

- 1 Games slipping. "Hold the cover, the game will definitely be ready." Enough. Already.
- 2 PR people that won't ever answer their phones. Ever.
- 3 Publishers who think that 94% is a poor score, when you know they averaged about 43% in their exams.
- 4 Deadlines: soggy pizza and taxis home as it's getting light. What happened to overtime?
- 5 Getting beaten at *Counter-Strike* because we can't practise 12 hours a day like the clans we have to play against.
- 6 Listening to Doris 'must be a pillow' Day, on deadline, every single month. Cheers Phil.
- 7 Internet and email going down simultaneously. What the hell are we supposed to do now? Pick up the phone?
- 8 Our production editor asking "Is that *Unreal 2* or *Unreal II*?" when we're in the middle of an intense *Quake 3* (III?) deathmatch. Get the dictionary and look up the word 'priority'.
- 9 Our printer, which always dies on deadline day. (Note to ourselves: never make cheap jibes about the IT department, they might hear you.)
- 10 Two words. Dave Woods



## DRESSING UP

### A WIG FOR ALL OCCASIONS...

The Supertest photo shoots have become legend in the Dennis Publishing offices, and it's not uncommon for PR visitors to end up demonstrating their wares to what looks like the dress rehearsal to a school pantomime while we wait for the photographer's lights to warm up.

Yes, there's nothing we like better than putting on a false moustache, period clothing and gurning like loons. In our time we've stopped traffic as WRENS, invaded posh golf clubs looking like extras from *Jeeves & Wooster*, wandered through the streets dressed as wizards and barbarians, and restaged *Reservoir Dogs* in badly-lit car parks.

The most notable effort, though, was atop Primrose Hill, dressed in full combat fatigues, sporting plastic rifles, crawling through dog shit, scaring elderly women and eventually attracting the attentions of the police, who let us off with a caution when we convinced them we weren't al-Qaeda operatives, but instead just sad geeks with overactive imaginations.



## DRUNKEN RANTS

### KEEPING ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN BUSINESS...



We all like a drink. A touch of sherry after a satisfying meal, perhaps? A snifter of port once the ladies have retired. Or just several tables full of wheat-beer, a round or two of slammers and then whatever remains are in the pub's sluice vats at the end of the night.

Truth be told, drink and *ZONE* don't mix. Although it's not for a lack of trying. Before our Supertests were carried out under Mark Hill's strict, scientific conditions, we just used to go down the pub and hope the tape recorder picked up something intelligible.

Sadly, it all came to a head on one such outing discussing 'post-pub' games. As the beer flowed, so did our senses and instead of a structured discussion about games, it descended into madness with insults flying everywhere. Richie screaming at Dave "You know nothing!" over and over again. Steve Hill telling people that they couldn't come back to his house to play games: "We're not animals in my house you know". The Supertest promptly died a death for around a year and a half. Top night.

## GLOBAL HARMONY

### ONE WORLD, ONE LOVE, ONE BIG ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN...

The world of gaming is an international one, and we at *ZONE* have always been open to our friends and comrades from around the world. Almost.

OK, we've been guilty in the past of having certain 'views' about the French. And yes, we were once threatened with lawsuits by the entire country of Korea due to some ill-chosen remarks about a nonsensical press release,



Steve 'Solidarity' Hill.

which ironically turned out to be have been written by a PR person from England. We should have known really.

But our crowning moment of international diplomacy had to be Korda and Hill (rapidly becoming the *ZONE* double act of choice) protesting at the Greek embassy in London following the country's decision to ban videogames.

Unfortunately, what started out as a mild protest became a flight from terror as the dynamic duo were pursued from the grounds by a crazed Greek bearing what looked like a meat cleaver. Bravely standing their ground for all of, ooh, two seconds, the lads fled to the back seat of a passing cab, and sped to the safety of the office fearing for their lives and leaving us without the dramatic photograph for the mag. *Pussies*.

## ON THE ROAD

### WE GO, WE SEE, WE CONQUER, WE GET DRUNK...

The main perk to this job is the chance to swan around the world on corporate expense accounts in the name of 'journalism'. As Mallo puts it, he "won't get out of bed for anything less than foreign trips or the chance to operate heavy machinery".

And what trips we've had. From drunken binges at exclusive country houses, to drunken binges in redneck American states, to drunken binges in Israeli brothels. Over the years our fearless correspondents have coped with fat Americans threatening us with slices of cake, hillbillies offering a peek at their shotguns, life-threatening injuries at SWAT training camps, and more offers of sexual favours than we can shake our sticks at.

The most recent example has been christened Hill & Korda's Excellent Parisian Adventure, which takes into account drink, drugs, strip joints (where one press-trip virgin was swindled out of £200 for a 10 minute conversation in French he couldn't understand before spending the rest of the trip head down muttering "I can't believe it..."), more drink, and a PR chap who stuck his charges on a coach while he put himself on the splendour of the Eurostar. He was home in less than three hours, while the coach got lost in the French countryside and finally arrived in Dover 20 hours later, minus one industry journalist who has yet to reappear. Not too shabby.



## FEMALE INTUITION

### DESPITE APPEARANCES, WE HAVE A SENSITIVE SIDE. SOMEWHERE...

We likes the ladeez at *ZONE*. Oh yes. Lean, mean, pulling machines to a man. In fact, so enamoured are we that one of our past news editors was not only once engaged to a prominent UK glamour girl, but has since moved on to become a rising member (as it were) of the LA porn industry. Yes, we're proper blokes. Apart from Rhianna.

As such *ZONE* has, over the years, been a (shaven?) haven for many a fine figure of feminine felinity – from discovering the first real-life Lara Croft to launching Kelly Brook's career. We've had scantily clad nuns fondling joysticks, soft-core porn stars posing with game boxes covering their 'bits', and we've even joined Jimmy White at a lap dancing club.

However there are lines that even we won't cross, except by mistake. One such line was a XXX *Doom* .wad that snuck onto a cover-mounted collection and nearly got us taken off the shelves again.



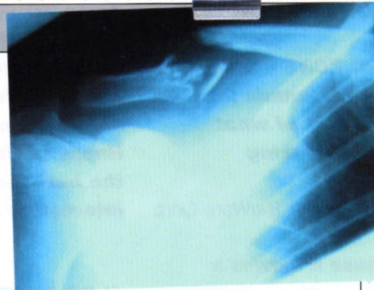
## GOOD RELATIONS

### WE LOVE EVERYBODY AND EVERYBODY LOVES US...

It's always hard to make friends in an ever-changing games industry, but to make enemies – no problem. Thanks to our unswerving devotion to honesty we tend to ruffle more feathers than a mating peacock.

We've had the likes of Dave 'Shiny' Perry throwing a strop after we suggested *Sacrifice* was merely OK. Derek Smart and Charles Cecil still refuse to speak to Prezzler following his *Battlecruiser* and *Broken Sword* reviews. And Chris Anderson managed to infuriate every PR in the business during his reign, up to the point that the 'C' word was used for the first time in a professional phone call before said PR person hung up unceremoniously.

But the ultimate toys and pram scenario belongs to one Steve *Kick Off Screech* and his feud with Steve Hill. A less than favourable review prompted hysterical ranting from Screech about Hill being up the *Champ Man* team's arse, culminating with him taking much delight on a public forum about Steve breaking his collarbone (Reality Check gone wrong – see issue 118). Mallo galloped onto the forum and claimed that it was "tits like Screech that made me leave the industry".





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

After 10 years of savage, biting reviews we've managed to alienate ourselves from almost every single developer in the world at some point or another. Luckily all of them (well nearly all) love us so much they always come crawling back for more. Here's the proof...

**“ Thank you for all the reviews, previews and coverage over the past ten years – you still make me feel really nervous when I open a magazine with a review of one of my games. Your habit of being totally honest is great for your readers and nerve-wracking for developers, but then every developer respects honest coverage, so many happy returns ”**

**Peter Molyneux** Lionhead Studios

**“ PC ZONE launched in the same year as The 7th Guest; a game by people who believed that the ‘Interactive Movie’ was the future of videogames. It’s amazing to consider how far we have come in that time and that PC ZONE has been there to document this progression. Revolution has always enjoyed working with ZONE and offers its congratulations to everyone who has helped to make it the magazine it is today. Here’s to the next ten years proving as exciting as those that have just passed, and I look forward to wishing you a happy 20th birthday. ”**

**Charles Cecil** Revolution

**“ All the best on your 10th anniversary. It’s quite a milestone to have survived this long through a period where a lot of the competition has closed shop. ”**

**Jay Wilbur** Epic

**“ I hate you because of the fun you made of the name ‘Speed Haste’. I will never, ever forget. “Take the ridiculous saying ‘more haste less speed’. And then look up ‘haste’ in the dictionary. Duncan MacDonald did, and discovered it was just another word for ‘speed’. Now remove the words ‘more’ and ‘less’. We get the saying ‘Speed Speed’. Or ‘Haste Speed’. Er...” I love you because you make fun of everyone else. ”**

**Javier Arévalo** Pyro

**“ I’ve always enjoyed reading PC ZONE and hope we’re both around to celebrate your 20th birthday. Can you imagine the games of 2013? Can’t wait! ”**

**Warren Spector** Ion Storm

**“ You guys are the bee’s knees. Without you, our lives here in the Pacific Northwest would be a little more grey. So happy birthday, and try not to get too snookered. ”**

**Gabe Newell** Valve



**“ It seems odd that PC ZONE has turned ten. For as long as I can remember, you’ve acted like seven year olds! Kidding aside, congrats and good luck during your next ten years! ”**

**Randy Pitchford** Gearbox

**“ I like PC ZONE because you are not afraid to call out a really shoddy game, but also because you stand behind the good games. PC ZONE is one of our favourite magazines, and something we’ve been reading for years. ”**

**Dr Greg Zeschuk** BioWare Corp

**“ Happy birthday to PC ZONE – the magazine that we read in Canada (at BioWare) to keep us abreast of what the UK game players are thinking and talking about! ”**

**Dr Ray Muzyka** BioWare Corp

**“ I love PC ZONE because it carries a sense of heritage that few other magazines bring to the games industry... I hate PC ZONE because it kids us old-timers into believing we are still relevant. ”**

**Jon ‘Sensible’ Hare**

**“ The worst thing about America is the censorship. I hate the soft approach they are forced to take in their television and magazines. PC ZONE makes me homesick for the edgy style of British coverage. I hope you not only enjoy the next ten years, but you also start a US version! ”**

**David Perry** Shiny

**“ Don’t you think the name ZONE is a bit early ‘90s? But then from a man who runs 2000AD as a comic about the future I guess I shouldn’t make fun of you. Happy birthday and may the next ten years be as interesting as the first. ”**

**Jason Kingsley** Rebellion

**“ PC ZONE tells it like it is – with both wit and wisdom – and I hope it continues to do so for the next ten years, so happy birthday and all the best. ”**

**Julian Gollop** Codo Games



**“Happy Birthday, ZONE! I’ll be sure to kick anyone from Gamer in the nuts next time I see them.”**

**CLIFF “CLIFFYB” BLESZINSKI** EPIC



**“Ten years! In this business, which is much like Monty Python's *Building Castles in the Swamp*, ten years is a great milestone. It means you've made it! It means your foundation is strong and you have learned to navigate the often-rocky road that is the games business. Congratulations and wishes for many more decades of success!”**

Richard “Lord British” Garriott

**“Happy 10th birthday PC ZONE! Even when (or more accurately, especially because) you're in the games industry, you often find that the only time you can devote to a game is to read its reviews. With reviews that are both informative and consistent, and reviewers who put a little of themselves into the reviews, but never get too personal, PC ZONE is a great way to be in the know.”**

Gregg Barnett  
Sick Puppies

**“Well, I admire your magazine for its dry, witty humour – I've only been a reader of PC ZONE in recent years and henceforth haven't been able to witness the development of the magazine over the past decade but if the current level of quality persists I'm positive PC ZONE will enjoy a long and successful lifespan.”**

Minh Le (aka Gooseman) Valve

**“Wow 10th birthday... where has all that time flown? I'd say good editorial style that combines an in-depth knowledge of games with not taking yourselves too seriously. I could go on, but it might start sounding like you've slipped me a tenner...”**

Demis Hassabis Elixir Studios

**“OK, pull no punches... hmmm... I think you should have more dense, infographics like Login magazine (from Japan), that stuff is really cool... a retrospective article on the lost Love Boat episodes would be good... also you need to have a duck hidden in every issue because ducks are funny... hard hitting, investigative reporting about the industry... you should even make up a bunch of it... and robots, you can never have too many robots. Happy birthday PC ZONE!”**

Will Wright Maxis

**“Happy 10th birthday to PC ZONE! Thank you for being solid supporters of the independent games development community, making the PC the home of the most original and daring games development. Here's looking forward to another ten, and PC gaming moving from strength to strength.”**

Jonathan Small Small Rockets

**“Ten Years! Blimey! There are a number of people here who have grown up on a diet of your fine magazine. On behalf of them, and everyone else at Lionhead, congratulations to PC ZONE for ten years of entertainment. PC ZONE has always been a pleasure to read, and long may it continue to be.”**

Jonty Barnes Black & White Studios

**“In the past decade we've seen dramatic and occasionally unexpected changes in PC gaming, but the one thing we've always been able to count on is the wit, humour, enthusiasm and no-nonsense reporting of PC ZONE – here's to growing older disgracefully.”**

Jonathan Newth  
Kuju Entertainment

**“It's hard to believe that PC ZONE is ten years old and still hasn't mastered the English language. Come on, where are all the ain'ts and the y'awls? Quit butchering the President's English! Oh, and happy birthday to the magazine that puts all other fish wraps to shame.”**

Eric Peterson Fever Pitch Studios

**“Happy Birthday, Zoners! You are true Warrior Kings, Abaddon has invited you to a party in his, errr, Wickerman... Congratulations on ten years of excellence! Best wishes from everyone at Black Cactus.”**

Black Cactus



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

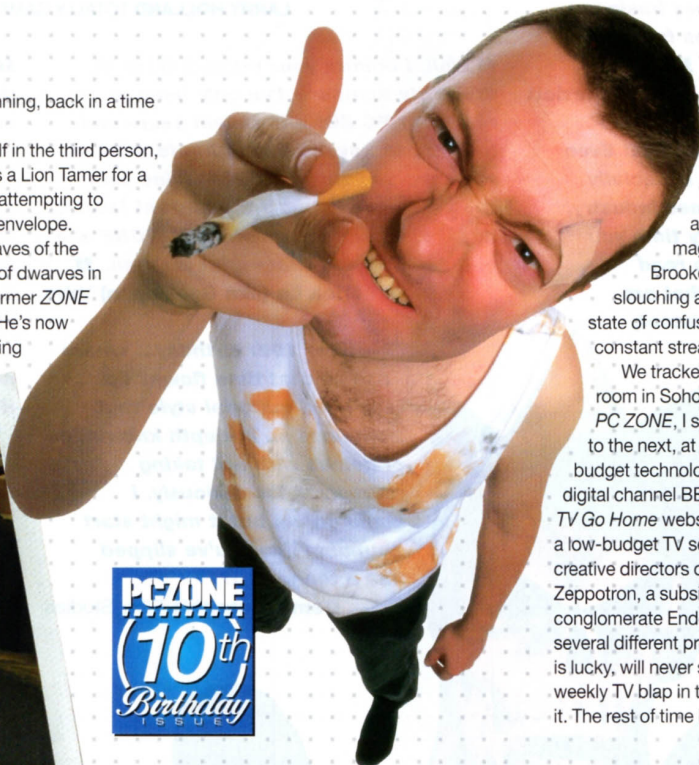
In ten years, **PC ZONE** has consumed and regurgitated more young men than Jonathon King in his heyday. This is where they landed...

## PAUL LAKIN

**Position on ZONE:** Launch editor

The man who started it all, Lakin was in from the beginning, back in a time when some witnesses claim that he actually had hair.

Stricken by a condition whereby he refers to himself in the third person, Lakin confessed: "After leaving *ZONE*, Paul worked as a Lion Tamer for a small Peruvian travelling circus before unsuccessfully attempting to be the first man to canoe up the Amazon in a prepaid envelope. Dispirited, he returned to the UK where he rode the waves of the Internet boom with his website selling pewter statues of dwarves in compromising situations. When this failed he joined former *ZONE* colleague David McCandless on [www.seethru.co.uk](http://www.seethru.co.uk). He's now lying low, producing websites at Channel 4, while waiting for the side-effects of his Patent Hair Restorer to wear off."



## CHARLIE BROOKER

**Position on ZONE:** Freelance gibberish/ crude cartoons/ winding up Mallo

A man with such little respect for deadlines that he once actually ended up owing the magazine money in late fines,

Brooker was often to be found slouching around the office in an obvious state of confusion, peppering the air with a near constant stream of obscenities.

We tracked him down to a windowless room in Soho, where he sobbed: "After leaving *PC ZONE*, I shuffled from one media outpost to the next, at one point presenting a zero-budget technology show on erstwhile viewer-free digital channel BBC Knowledge. Then I started the *TV Go Home* website, which grew into a book and a low-budget TV series. I'm currently one of five creative directors of TV production company Zeppotron, a subsidiary of sinister *Big Brother* conglomerate Endemol, where I'm developing several different projects, which, if the human race is lucky, will never see the light of day. And I write a weekly TV blap in the *Guardian Guide*. That's about it. The rest of time I just sit around like a...*(snip)*."

## 10 BEST EXCUSES FROM LAZY FREELANCERS

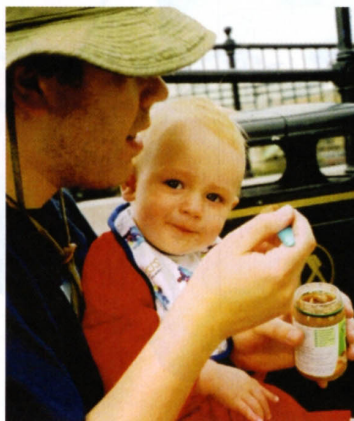
- 1 "I fell asleep straight after you called yesterday and have only just woken up." (36 hours later.)  
*Chris 'narcotic' Anderson*
- 2 "I picked up the code from the post office and on the way home slipped and broke my wrist. I've been in the hospital ever since."  
*Chris Anderson*
- 3 "I can't go to the press event because I'm in court today."  
*Chris Anderson*
- 4 "It'll be with you in five minutes dude." 24 hours later...  
"Just sending it now buddy..." 24 hours later... "My server has been hax0red, be with you in five minutes buddy..."  
Repeat to fade.  
*Steve Spence*
- 5 "It's going to take me twice as long to write the review because I can only type with one hand because of my broken collar bone. And that's your fault."  
*Steve Hill*
- 6 "F\*k that. You think I'm getting out of bed for the postman for the sake of a £50 review?"  
*Steve Hill*
- 7 "You only sent one disc." "Did you check the DVD case we put in the envelope?" "No."  
*Richie Shoemaker* doesn't make excuses.
- 8 "Forget it, I don't get out of bed unless it's a lead review, a trip to America or the chance to operate heavy machinery."  
*Mallo*
- 9 "Richie, do you want to review *Earth & Beyond*? You've been playing the beta for weeks." "No."  
*Richie Shoemaker* doesn't make excuses.
- 10 "Didn't you get it yesterday? I definitely e-mailed it. Let me send it again now."  
Every freelancer we've ever had

## JEREMY WELLS

**Position on ZONE:** Editor

The original Essex Man, Wells' twin obsessions of James Bond and Michael Caine provided a backdrop of endless catchphrases, occasionally interspersed with a passable Chewbacca impression.

"Where am I now? Working for O2 - which means going to Arsenal matches and looking after wireless games for UK, Ireland, Holland and Germany. Basically, we're where PC gaming was 20-odd years ago - *Space Invaders*, *BomberMan*, *Pac Man*, *Asteroids* etc - retro heaven! We've also got more recent games such as *Doom* and *Worms* coming up soon - games that were released on PC when I was at *ZONE*. We're just about to launch peer-to-peer gaming on your mobile so you can play against other people. Phones with much bigger screens, built-in D-pads and dedicated graphics chips will be around very soon. Basically, it's the same as it was back in the early '90s with PCs - but the keys are smaller."



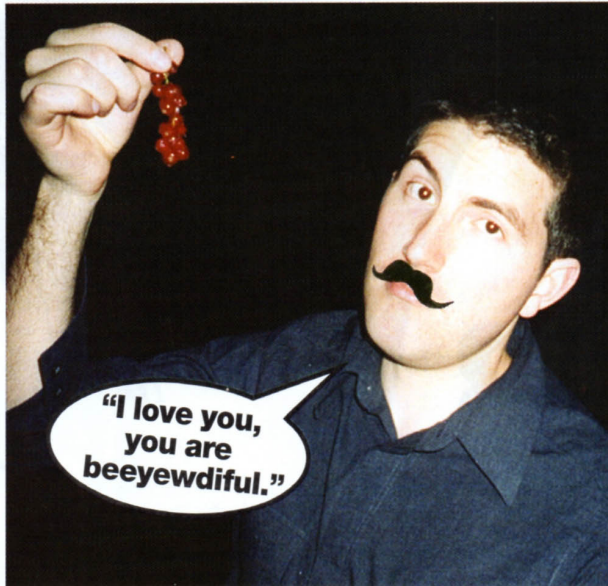
## RICHIE SHOEMAKER

**Position on ZONE:** Sat on his arse

One of the few people on earth to converse via a satellite delay, we were amazed to learn that Richie had a pulse, never mind a sperm count. However, he surprised us all by spawning a mini-Shoe, which effectively ended his tenure on *ZONE*, not to mention put paid to his budding career as a Robin Askwith look-a-like.

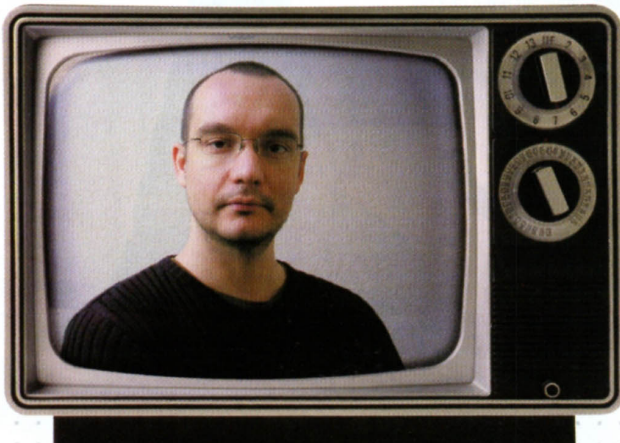
Slumped amid piles of piss-stained nappies, Richie eventually said: "I left *PC ZONE* at the end of May 2002 to pursue a career of house husbandry - to look after my newborn son. Unfortunately, very little has changed: I still write for the magazine, I still have to deal with shit on a daily basis and instead of having to calm down mewling PR people and a nagging editor, I have a screeching child and a nagging wife - no change there then. Still, at least I get to watch *The Fimbles*."



**MARK HILL****Position on ZONE:** Non-descript

Mild-mannered Mark pitched up at *PC ZONE* under an assumed name, having fled from National Service in his native Spain.

With the heat off, he is now lying low in Guildford, from where he delivered this chilling message: "I only started on the mag four years ago (left two years later), but already there is no one left on staff from when I arrived. Either *PC ZONE* is a cardiac valve constantly pumping new blood in to keep itself young and fresh, or no one can stand working there for very long. I began editing the arse end of the mag and climbed all the way – that's one step – to news editor. Then I had an epiphany: if you work freelance you can sleep until late afternoon nearly every day of the week. I've got a couple of major projects on the go, but I won't tell you what they are. You'd only point and laugh. You can find out when I'm famous instead."

**MACCA****Position on ZONE:** The Master

A man whose arrogance was matched only by his freak ability at first-person shooters, Macca could often be found flicking his floppy fringe during another extended bout of virtual bloodletting. He has now swapped mouse for teat, having joined the growing ranks of *PC ZONE* fathers, and is believed to be working on a dot.com sitcom about a hip-hop chip-shop, that has already been rejected by most cable channels...

Oh hang on, we've just got an email: "Written for various newspapers and mags including *Wired* and *Maxim*. Got into TV. Edited and wrote comedy/satire website [www.seethru.co.uk](http://www.seethru.co.uk) for the 'interactive' BBC TV series *Attachments*. Now do similar things for Channel 4 and the British Government (no shit). Recorded an album called *Smoothen & Faster* which won *Q Magazine*'s Starmaker award and went on to sell 40 copies. Now have baby daughter and working on first screenplay. See more stuff at [www.davidmccandless.com](http://www.davidmccandless.com)."

**CHRIS ANDERSON****Position on ZONE:** Editor/Deputy Editor

The only person ever to have a number one single in Germany and edit *PC ZONE*, Anderson's stewardship of the magazine is largely remembered for a series of high profile fall-outs with PR people, and a liberal smoking policy that went some way towards reversing the progress that has been made since the Victorian London smog lifted.

Anderson's whereabouts is currently shrouded in mystery (and cigarette smoke). Believed to have moved to Norrath on a permanent basis, attempts to contact him proved futile, although we drew the line at playing *EverQuest* as a level 32 cleric just so we could grab a few words.

But if we had, he may have said this: "Woke up this morning, killed a rat, smoked a cigarette, left the cave, walked around for a bit, cast a spell on a half-elf, killed a rat, had a cigarette, went back to the cave, had a cigarette, killed a rat..."



Chris Anderson, before fag (insert) and after fag (main).

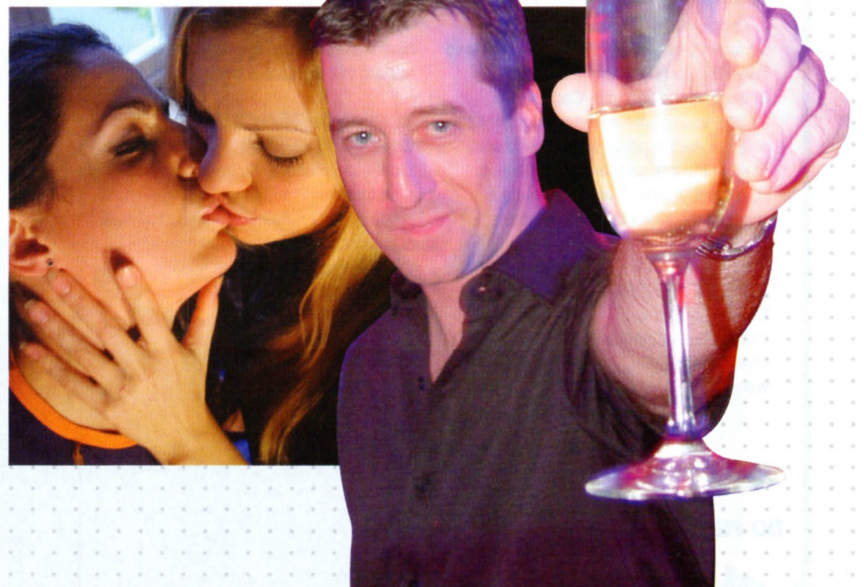
**"I did my first proper hardcore shoot recently. It was great fun"**

**PAUL MALLINSON**  
LIVING THE DREAM**MALLO****Position on ZONE:** Anger manager

After leaving *PC ZONE* in 1999, Mallo has spent the intervening years subsisting largely on a diet of Prozac and Monster Munch. Now decamped to Los Angeles, he is making inroads into the porn industry, flushed by the runaway success of his website [www.girlskissing.co.uk](http://www.girlskissing.co.uk).

In his own words: "Never has there been a more twisted take on the rags to riches tale than Mallo fulfilling his lifetime ambition of becoming a porn photographer. I set up a business out here, and am now designing websites for some of the hottest porn starlets in the world.

"What can I tell you? I'm doing a dream job. Tonight I hung out with porn star Cris Taliana – at her place. Recently I had dinner with the hottest new porn star in town – Jenna Haze – who I'm taking with me to Hawaii for a photo shoot. I did my first proper hardcore shoot recently. It was great fun. Oh and the pics came out real good. This is something I'll be doing a lot more of in the future."

**10 STUPIDEST GAME NAMES**

THERE'S BEEN SOME BEAUTS, BUT HERE ARE OUR FAVES – YES, THEY'RE REAL

- 1 WOODRUFF AND THE SCHNIBBLE OF AZIMUTH
- 2 REX NEBULARA AND THE COSMIC GENDER BENDER
- 3 BIING! SEX, INTRIGEN UND SKALPELLE
- 4 GILBERT GOODMATE AND THE MUSHROOM OF FUNGORIA
- 5 SANTA FE MYSTERIES: THE ELK MOON MURDERS
- 6 DIGGLES
- 7 DIVINE DIVINITY
- 8 QUAD: THE QUINTESSENTIAL ART OF DESTRUCTION
- 9 ARCANUM: OF STEAMWORKS AND MAGIC OBSCURA
- 10 THRONE OF DARKNESS





# MR CURSOR

(He's afraid of the 10th anniversary edition of *PC ZONE*, and Pitcairn Island)

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME

If you've only been reading *PC ZONE* for the last three or four years you won't have a clue as to who I am. So here's some info to bring you up to speed...

(1) I wrote the back page thing for *PC ZONE* issue one.

(2) I didn't really understand anything about computers, so my column followed suit - ie it wasn't exactly about computers.

(3) I continued to write this back page for several years, and it continued to be not exactly about computers, and, eventually, not really about anything at all.

(4) By about issue 50 everybody was catching up with this fact, so I decided to get the hell out.

(5) Being a lazy, scrounging hedonistic tosser by nature,

I thought it might be a good idea to give up work completely and sign on the dole somewhere nice and hot. To this end I bought an atlas from a car boot

sale and looked within for the British Dependent Territory (you can sign on in any of these, y'see?) which had the most agreeable climate. I was drawn, fairly quickly, to Ceylon. Rule Britannia, and long live the unemployment benefit system.

(6) A friend then told me that my atlas was somewhat out of date: it was from 1926. He gave me a 1996 one to peruse.

(7) British Dependent Territories were thinner on the ground in this version of the book, so I dropped Ceylon (now apparently called Sri Lanka) and plumped instead for a tiny island in the Pacific Ocean (on the Tropic of Capricorn).

(8) Pitcairn Island was my destination now. It was the place where the Mutiny On The Bounty people had ended up. I'd seen the films. It was obviously a jewel on the bracelet of the world.

(9) Wrong...

## ENFORCED GEOGRAPHY LESSONS

Getting to Pitcairn used up all the money I had, which wouldn't

have mattered had the place been the idyll I'd expected. But it wasn't. My dream of living on a white sandy beach eating coconuts and passion fruit was replaced with the grim reality of mud, mangroves and a constant, clammy sun-blocking mist. There weren't even any sexy native girls. Pitcairn's population of 40 was entirely male: in-bred, toothless, hairy, and all sharing the same scary piercing grey eyes. Having arrived, I now wanted to leave, and for that I needed some dole money...

"No jawb centres a-here, me old swabby," I was told, once I'd explained what a Job Centre was.

"What about a Post Office?" I asked.

"I suspek the nearest ye'll find lies in the Falkland Isles, and she be 4,000 miles that-away."

I asked about money.

"There are only two currencies hereabouts, swabby, and she'll be your mouth and your arse!"

Oh no.

## 3, 2, 1, HERE WE COME...

I don't know if you've ever tried to hide from 40 crazed south-sea hillbillies on an island measuring not much more than a mile to each side, but you can probably imagine how difficult it might be. And difficult it is, but luckily not impossible. I picked up a touch of swamp rot on my feet, knees and hands, and my diet of leeches did weird things with my digestive system. But I remained undetected for two months. Then a boat came, which I managed to sneak aboard in the dead of night.

## SLOW BOAT TO CHINA

Or, to be more accurate, a glacial boat to God-knows where. By day I was hiding in a crate behind the funnel, and at night I'd creep about on deck, searching for water and - once my leeches had run out - food. It was during one of these little forages that I saw the chart showing our

destination: Tristan da Cunha, another British Dependent Territory. Hoorah! Would there be a Job Centre there? As it turned out, no. What about a Post Office? Yes, amazingly. And that's where I'll be in a minute - at the Tristan da Cunha Post Office - mailing off this very page to *PC ZONE*, all written on an old-fashioned typewriter. I've been on the island for about three years now, and it's shite, sure, but it beats the f\*\*\* out of Pitcairn. And besides, a couple of months ago I got chatting to a passing pau-pau boat captain called N'gango. He's on his way to Uruguay at the moment, but he promised me he'd pick me up on the way back and give me a lift to his own country...

"It is sunshine and sand there, my friend," he said. "You can live a free life, laugh, dance and eat your dreamed-of coconuts on the beach."

Excellent. Sierra Leone here I come! (Noooooooooooo! - Ed). [X]





PC  
CD-ROM

# Highland Warriors™



LEAD NATIONS - OUTMANOEUVRE ARMIES - SHAPE HISTORY - 4 CULTURES AWAIT YOUR COMMAND



MARCH 2003

NOVALOGIC®

[WWW.NOVALOGIC.COM](http://WWW.NOVALOGIC.COM)

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# Port Royale

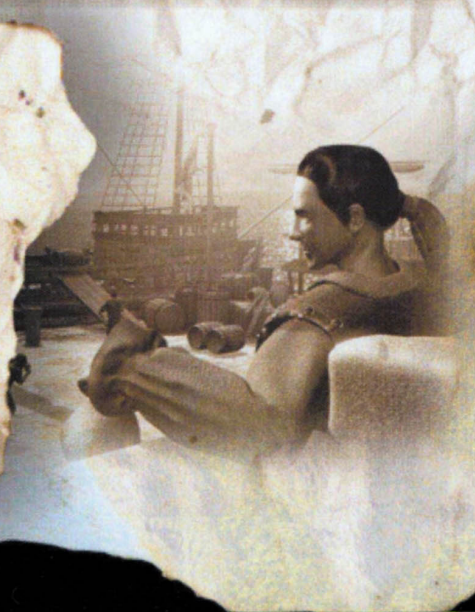
Set sail on a Caribbean adventure with pirates, sea battles, expeditions, voyages, missions and buried treasure! Port Royale is an unscripted, completely dynamic, open ended world, set in a real historic location, with some incredible 3D graphics

- Gold, Pirates and historic naval warfare.
- Full tutorial included to launch you onto the high seas
- Provides endless hours (easily 250 plus) of gameplay
- Set in the Caribbean in the 16th century
- Full 3D graphics engine
- Historically accurate and realistic in-game graphics
- Designed by gamers for those who love RTS adventure, trading and tactical combat

Diary Entry, 5th June 1572

God only knows how I ended up in this forsaken place. In part I have the Dutch to thank, whose vessels swamped our markets with their cargo, 'til my father's shipping company barely earned a penny from its voyages. So into the New World I ventured to try my luck - though luck has been in scarce supply.

A gentleman's not suited to these parts - as we saw when I was set upon by pirates. They sank my ship - and that I saved my skin was the only good fortune I have had so far. And so I am here, in this small town of Caracas. Throughout the last weeks I have toiled, with some other sailors, to restore an old sloop to seaworthiness. Not long now to our maiden voyage, and I wonder whether one day I shall return a wealthy nobleman, or meet my maker here.





Sail away on a 16th Century ship



Trade with the New World



Realistic sea battles



Choose your adventure



*"The centre-piece of Port Royale are the sea battles"*

*"Grab your parrot, eyepatch and peg leg for the piratey trading sim Port Royale"*

**PC ZONE**

*"A trading sim with a bit more bite"*

**Playerofgames.com**

*"Graphically it is highly developed, with full support of advanced Ge-Force features"*

*"An open ended game of sea exploration and trading"*

**PC GAMER**

**April 2003**

**www.ascaron.com**



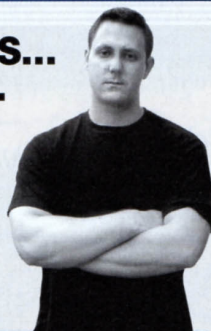
**bigben**  
interactive

**ASCARON**



# REVIEWS

UN...DIS...  
TRAC...  
TED



■ **REVIEWS EDITOR** Martin Korda

▲ Now here's a tough one. Can I go this entire column without once mentioning, alluding to or even hinting that this is our 10th anniversary issue? Looks like that's a no then.

Ten years. Long time. Hmmm? Yes, very. Still, here in the reviews section, it's business as usual. Working on a strict diet of the finest new PC releases, I've managed to stay utterly focussed on.... yes I'd love another piece of cake Rhianna, thank you. What was I saying just then?

In truth, this issue has been a somewhat nomadic experience for me, as I've been racing backwards and forwards in the mag taking care of half of Jamie's news section as well as this one while he has been off sunning himself in the US, enjoying days-of-sex with two girls, or something along those lines. And there was him trying to convince us it was all in the name of writing this month's lead preview. Pah!

Anyway, when I haven't been doing that I've been racing to the back of the mag to write about plates (very strange) and then back here to play all the great new titles which have landed on my desk over the past month. And there's been a fair few of those, I can tell you.

*Vietcong* had pretensions of being the first decent PC game based around the Vietnam war. But will it be a success or die a horrible laboured death, with electrodes stuck to its ears? Find out on page 86.

Meanwhile, C&C: *Generals* and *Praetorians* fought it out to be this month's top RTS dog, while *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, *IGI 2: Covert Strike* and *Raven Shield* tried to out-sneak each other. So hopefully there's plenty here for you to be getting on with while I go and get mindlessly drunk on cheap champagne. If I recover in time, I'll see you same time, same place, next month. Cheers.



Take part in one of history's most horrific wars in this highly-awaited jungle-based shooter. You lose it here, and you're in a world of hurt. Turn to page 86 to read our world exclusive review.

## THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

Some people (mainly game publishers) say that our scoring system is harsh. It's not. It's honest and built around the seemingly outdated idea that 50 per cent is an average score. Likewise, 70 per cent is a good score, anything above 80 per cent is excellent, and 90 per cent and above is a Classic. Talking of Classic awards, don't expect to see one every issue as we don't chuck them around like confetti.

## OUR REVIEWERS

We think our reviewers are the best in the business. Each one is a specialist in numerous genres and will have played every major release so no game is judged in isolation. We also make sure the right game gets reviewed by the right person,

which means you won't see Steve Hill reviewing an RPG and we won't let Rhianna loose on *FIFA 2003*. We know that occasionally you might disagree with us but we're big enough to take criticism. You can email your thoughts to letters@pczone.co.uk, or get them off your chest instantly on the forums at www.pczone.co.uk. If you think you can do better then why not send us a review – if it's good enough we'll print it in the magazine.

## ONLINE REVIEWS AND REVIEW UPDATES

We review a lot of games before they go on sale, and if there are no public servers running before we go to print we won't second guess how the game's going to play online. Instead you'll find dedicated online reviews of all the major releases in our regular Update section. This is also the place where we take a fresh look at games we think have changed significantly – as is the case with persistent online games or through major patch releases.

## OUR PCS

We test games on a variety of systems so we can report how they perform in the real world. All our reviewed games are played on the manufacturer's minimum specification, as well as our top-end rig, the Area-51 from Alienware.



Only games that score 90 per cent or more receive the coveted Classic award. The best of the best.



The second tier award for games scoring between 80 and 89 per cent. Essential purchases.

## MEET THE TEAM

(When they were ten)



**DAVE WOODS**

C&C: *Generals* and *Unreal II*



**JAMIE SEFTON**

*Deus Ex 2: Invisible War*

What are you currently playing?

What were you doing on your tenth birthday?

Look at the bloody picture. And yes, I'm ashamed of myself.

Drawing my own comics and selling them to my gran.





86

**VIETCONG**  
Intense jungle warfare



94

**C&C: GENERALS**  
The biggest name in RTS goes 3D



112

**RE-RELEASES**  
Older games at a budget price



66

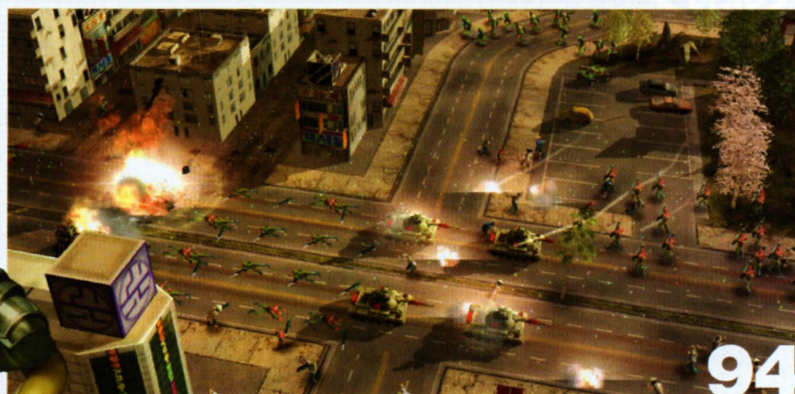
**SUPERTEST**  
What's the best game of all time?

## DEFINITIVE REVIEWS

- 86 **VIETCONG**
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- 106 **TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD**
- 110 **WAR AND PEACE**
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INCLUDING TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON, HOMEWORLD: CATAclysm, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: SPECIAL EDITION, SEGA GT AND MANY MORE
- 66 **SUPERTEST**  
PC ZONE MEMBERS PAST AND PRESENT ARGUE AS TO WHAT IS THE BEST GAME OF ALL TIME



90



94



100



**MARTIN KORDA**

*Unreal II: The Awakening*

Downloading 8-bit porn on my first PC.



**ANTHONY HOLDEN**

*Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*

Living in Australia learning how to work in a bar in London.



**RHIANNA PRATCHETT**

*Age Of Mythology*

I was the magic white rabbit in the school play.



**MARK HILL & FRIEND**

*Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield*

Learning to speak English in Spain, what I do good now.



**STEVE O'HAGAN**

*Unreal II: The Awakening*

Me, I was a heartbreaker, widowmaker – look at the smile...



**KEITH PULLIN**

*C&C: Generals*

Awaiting the dawn of the computer gaming era.



# VIETCONG

£29.99 | Pub: Gathering | Dev: Pterodon | ETA: March 21 | [www.vietcong-game.com](http://www.vietcong-game.com)

**REQUIRES** Pill 700, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**DESIRES** Pill 1Ghz and a 64Mb 3D card

**Don't mention the war. Mark Hill did once, but he thinks he got away with it**



Take out the enemy before they can take cover.

**FOR A LONG** time it would have been unthinkable to have a realistic, gory shooter set during the Vietnam war. Not because we have any kind of taboo surrounding it (at least not in Europe), but because every film we've ever seen on the subject is about the horror of war, the injustice of it, the hellishness of it. For both sides. There are no *Guns of Navarone* or *U-571* equivalents for this conflict.

War videogames, on the other hand, are about the fun of war, the gung-ho, hero-

forming, children-playing-with-toy-guns side of it. And it was hard to reconcile that with the image of kids losing their legs and marines raping and murdering civilians.

*Vietcong* gets around this by showing the war as it was fought by professional special forces. And yet there's no getting around the fact that it is told exclusively from the point of view of the US, which is to say that it's told from the point of view of the loser.

We're used to kicking Nazi ass in dozens of World War II games, safe in the knowledge that massacring the Swastika wearers is not only morally healthy, but that, no matter how many times you fail in a mission, your side is going to win. In *Vietcong*, nothing you do can change the outcome.

## KICK SOME COMMIE BUTT

There's no point saying that Pterodon (who received some help from *Hidden & Dangerous* and *Mafia* developer Illusion Softworks for this one) offers a neutral and impartial account because they're Czech instead of American. If that were true you'd be able to play the war

## INPERSPECTIVE

### MEDAL OF HONOR

Issue: 112, Score: 94%

If you'd rather shoot your way through WWII, *Medal of Honor* is a superlative shooter, although it has its own share of dreary levels. The good ones make up for it, though.

### RAINBOW SIX 3:

### RAVEN SHIELD

Reviewed Issue: 127, Score: 84%

If what you're hankering for is a tactical dimension, *Raven Shield* has some great team action, made simple enough for anyone to enjoy. Very tough game though.





Sorry ladies and gentlemen, but the pool's closed.

from the other side too. Okay, you can take the role of a VC soldier in multiplayer, but that's just a skin.

Ironically, by focusing on the special forces and putting to one side the drama of the conflict, with none of the scathing criticism of a *Platoon* or a *Full Metal Jacket*, *Vietcong* becomes more of a flag-waving exercise than any US-made game on the subject would dare to be.

Of course, that's not the point. This is just another war. There are two sides. You're on one and your job is to kill and maim the other. Simple as that.

Or it would be if your character, Steve R Hawkins, didn't arrive on a chopper at his new base at the start of the game desperate to see some "real action". And if your teammates didn't spend the whole game shouting out things like "eat shit motherf\*\*\*\*\* gooks!". They're not doing it because they're incredibly terrified, but because they're enjoying every second of it. This kind of language is just a shortcut to



Raining in Vietnam? That's unusual.



Just another day in the Corps.



You and your team can pick up and use enemy weapons.

**"There are two sides. You're on one and your job is to kill and maim the other"**

make people feel they're taking part in a Vietnam movie, but though there are great shooter moments here, that's one thing it never quite achieves.

#### BROWN AND FAKE

For one thing, the jungles of *Vietcong* look nothing like the lush rainforests of those movies. The greens are far too pale and sickly, and the graphics in general are rather weak. I know all those films were actually shot in places like the Philippines, and that

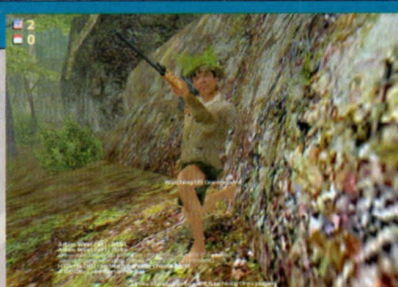
the developers spent time in Vietnam researching the real environments. But the end result is nevertheless little more than muddy browns and lifeless greens. You don't get that sense of heat and humidity, of lush vegetation and thriving animal life (except for a few birds, frogs and butterflies).

The other problem is that however hard the game tries to create characters around you that talk and have their own personalities (stereotypical in the extreme though they are),

## GET YOUR PYJAMAS ON

### ONLINE IS THE PLACE FOR VC TO SHINE

The multiplayer test demo has been out for a while now, and has proved rather popular. I wouldn't be surprised, in fact, if this were the part of the game to really prosper, with the single-player campaign relegated to an interesting aside. After all, here your buddies will die, and the so-so graphics are less important than the myriad hiding places a jungle setting affords. The most interesting mode is by far the co-op one, mainly because it's used so little elsewhere.



*Vietcong* could well prove to be huge online.





Bird Three, this is Hotel Six. Maintain --- positions. Over.

**Vietcong does have some fairly cinematic moments.**

it's very hard to care about people who are immortal. Knowing your pals can take a barrage of bullets without lasting consequences isn't the best way to suspend your disbelief. To say nothing of how unrealistic it is to see it happen.

I understand the logistics of having to keep them alive since you need them for each mission and, because you have virtually no control over them, it would have been tremendously annoying to lose a mission every time one of them got killed. But it also makes it hard

to think of them as real people, or to get very engrossed in something so obviously fake.

#### INTENSE BUT BRAINGLESS

That's not to say *Vietcong* doesn't do some things right to pull you in. To begin with, it follows the recent trend of giving you a base you can explore between missions, where you can talk to people and, in this case, read your journal and even listen to some fantastic 60's rock on the radio.

The game's biggest strength though, is the massive firefights

you engage in, using fallen logs and thick bushes as cover, wondering where the hell all those enemy bullets are coming from, and watching both sides fill the air with shouts, lead and expletives. At times it feels like the beach landing level in *Medal of Honor*.

There is a slight problem with the difficulty level though, in that the normal setting is a tad too easy for seasoned shooter players, while the hard one raises the bar to the usual Czech 'die-every-five-seconds' standard. As for the highest level – forget about it. It's nigh on impossible.

I should also mention that while you do have team mates

in most missions, this is still very much an action-oriented first-person shooter. There's not much in the way of tactics, if anything at all. The commands you can give are simply to hold back or attack, and at times it seems the other soldiers are there only as convenient dispensers. The medic heals you, the radio man sends and receives orders, the engineer gives you ammo, and so on.

#### HARD NHUT

Perhaps the most important team mate is Nhut, an anti-communist Vietnamese who knows the area well and serves as a guide to wherever you're supposed to be going. The problem with him is that he moves so damn slowly (always on the look-out for traps and enemies, you see) you soon lose patience and take the lead yourself, occasionally using him to point in the right direction if you start getting lost.

Yet another annoyance is having to radio in to HQ every few minutes. It might be realistic and necessary to get new objectives, but it interrupts the flow of the game badly. Missions can have slightly different



#### SECOND OPINION

MARTIN KORDA

I find myself in two minds over this one. On one side it's a fairly ugly, tacticless team-based shooter. Let's face it, Vietnam was all about platoons of soldiers working together, bonding and desperately trying to survive. So what's the point if your team-mates can't die? It's one of the most ludicrous concepts I've ever seen in a so-called tactical-shooter. It verges on the idiotic.

However, on the other hand, *Vietcong* does carry some rather appealing features too. Despite being invincible, your team-mates don't run off and complete whole levels on their own, which puts the onus on you to take each mission by the scruff of the neck and ultimately makes you feel like a real war hero. The abundance of places to hide and the ability to use the foliage to your advantage also adds appeal, and the enemy often shows great intelligence when using the terrain to to good – and often deadly – effect.

Ultimately, it's flawed and not too pretty, but fairly entertaining and varied as well. However, if you want tactics and real tension, go for *Raven Shield* instead.

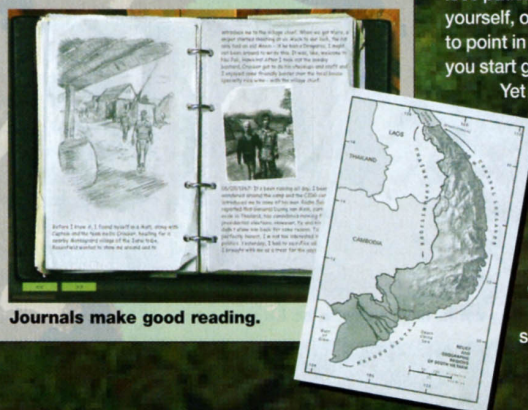
outcomes, but this seems to make no difference whatsoever to what happens in the aftermath. In the first level, for example, you kill a sniper taking pops at you when you pay a local village a visit for medical

## "It's very hard to care about people who are immortal"

### PLEASE READ ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS

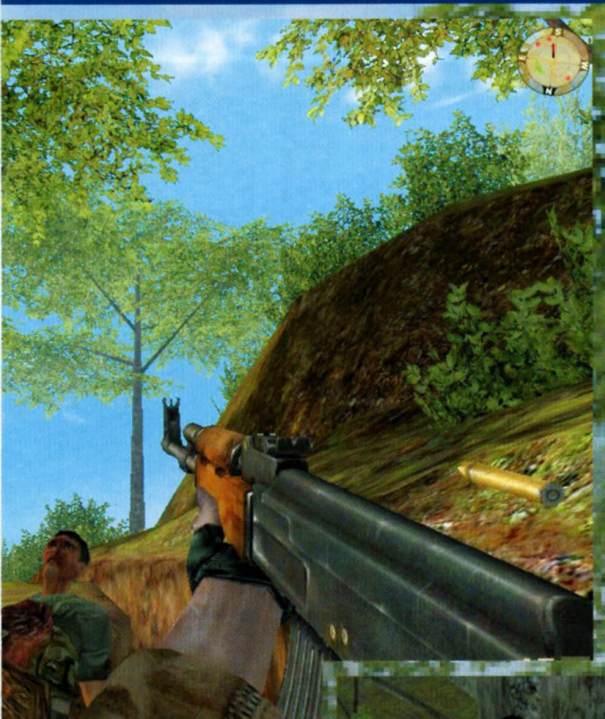
#### INFORMATION IS POWER

Your bunker is not only a place where you can chill out to the radio between missions, it also contains a wealth of information about the war and the country of Vietnam. The game takes place in 1967, and you can find documents explaining some of the history and geography of the place at that time. This is also the place to read up on the background of each of the characters in your team and the different weapons at your disposal. The game is made a little bit more personal by a journal your character keeps, detailing aspects of previous missions in much greater detail than you experienced them, adding anecdotes and other encounters.



Journals make good reading.





Graphically, Vietcong is poor.

aid. You're told it's too dangerous to follow the marksman's pals up into the mountains, leaving you to decide whether to head back and report their escape, or follow them, kill them and find some documents on their person. But whichever course you take, the outcome is identical, save for the report on your mission debriefing.

The weapons are pretty standard fare and are all satisfyingly reproduced (the grenades deserve particular mention for the ringing they leave in your ears when detonated too close). There are also moments where you get to drive a jeep and do the customary shooting-endless-ammo-from-the-side-of-a-chopper as you hover over paddy fields and mountains. Brainless, but a lot of fun.



Strangely enough, your team mates never die.



"I'm behind you."

### PITCH BLACK

The levels that stick in my mind for the wrong reasons are those set in enemy tunnels, where you must venture alone, with a silenced pistol and some lightsticks. These are possibly the ugliest and duller I've ever



"What's happened to your leg?"

more of an impact online than it does in single player.

In the end, *Vietcong* is caught between being a tactical team shooter and a straight FPS, without quite achieving either. And the ugliness of it all can be hard to cope with after so much repetitive scenery. But crank the difficulty level up, and at the end of the day there are more than enough intense moments in *Vietcong* to make it a worthwhile challenge for any shooter veteran. **[C+]**

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY (O)



Vietcong: what you won't see.

### NEW WORLD ORDER

US troops were not exactly on best behaviour in the 'Nam, but here you encounter nothing like that. Perhaps not wanting to offend the American market (especially in these sensitive times), they've presented a very clean view of the war, with the communist north portrayed unambiguously as the baddie.

It also seems a shame to have a team in place but have virtually no control over them. It needn't have been a *Hidden & Dangerous* type of affair, but a proper command structure would have given it some added tactical depth.

encountered. You spend most of the time in utter darkness, with only your crosshair to let you know if there's a wall in front of you or not (although if you turn the brightness right up and turn the light in your room off, you can just make out your surroundings). Original, perhaps. Tedious, definitely. When you do have light you're confronted with the most boring, uniform brown colour scheme since the first *Quake*. And the fact that you can't pick up the occasional lamps you find in side-holes really grates.

When you do come across a

good level though, it tends to be very enjoyable. Like the one where you have to defend a radio relay on top of a hill with a bunch of team-mates, while the VC come up at you from all sides. They're almost impossible to spot until you find the sniper rifle and start picking them off as they crawl behind logs and through ditches.

### STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

There's the occasional touch of humour in there. Like when you pick up some VC propaganda and your character exclaims: "Up your ass, commies!"

There are also some good ideas, such as the way you can crouch behind cover and come up just enough to let off a few rounds, or the way you can crawl under logs or hop over them – all of which will have

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Very intense firefights
- ✓ Some great tunes
- ✓ Varied missions
- ✗ Uneven quality of missions
- ✗ No tactics
- ✗ Not a looker

# 81

No-one said war was pretty



# METAL GEAR SOLID 2

■ £29.99 | Pub: Konami | Dev: Konami | ETA: March 7 | [www.metalgearsolid2.de](http://www.metalgearsolid2.de)

**REQUIRES** PIII 800, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 1GHz, 256Mb RAM, and a GeForce 3 or above 3D card

**Only when he had mastered the art of silent inhalation did they give him the codename... Anthony Holden**



Hiding dead bodies – or yourself – in lockers is crucial to progressing undetected.



## INPERSPECTIVE

### SPLINTER CELL

Reviewed issue 125, Score 94%

The cheek, the temerity! *Splinter Cell* sets out to beat *Metal Gear* at its own game, and actually succeeds. If you fancy a stealth masterpiece with more gameplay variety and less of the 'interactive movie' pretensions, *Splinter Cell* is your only choice.

### IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE

Reviewed issue 127, Score 71%

It's big, it's bold and it's full of sneaky perimeter penetration, but this sequel has been left behind a bit in the 'thinker-shooter' stakes. However, if you like ambushing soldiers and being in the great outdoors, this isn't a bad first-person alternative.

**METAL GEAR** *Solid*, eh? A name that can't help but conjure mixed feelings in the heart of a PC gamer. The series that virtually invented the stealth action genre – certainly defined it – and ruled over it comfortably for several years.

The previous MGS is one of my personal favourite games of all time, but on the PC of course, it didn't live up to its potential, with a delayed release and notoriously shoddy conversion. Now, once again, the legend of

the sequel has preceded its appearance on PC, the PS2 game supposedly taking the cinematic grandeur and covert coolness of the series to incredible new heights. The problem for us PC types is that, thanks to some irksome console exclusivity deals, *Metal Gear Solid 2* is making it to our screens more than 15 months later, in the expanded and rebranded form of *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*. And in the meantime, *Splinter Cell* has

come along to refine the covert-ops formula into an even more playable distillation of hide and sneak action.

Fifteen months is a long time to wait. And I'm sure plenty of you didn't. For those people, I'll cut straight to the chase – *MGS2: Substance* is essentially the same game as the original PS2 version, *Sons Of Liberty*. Sure, there's a giant nuclear robot-load's worth of extra material in there, with five standalone side-missions, a

bunch of unlockable characters, a truly ridiculous number of time-attack training stages and a few other bonuses such as extra dog tags to collect. But the central game remains fundamentally the same – they haven't even put the much-vaunted skateboarding mode in.

However, if with monk-like restraint you've actually managed to wait for this game to grace your PC, you are about to be handsomely rewarded. *Metal Gear Solid 2* was and is a



# SUBSTANCE



You can drop into first-person to aim your weapon, or peek out the side of a cardboard box.



The heat vision isn't used to half the effect of *Splinter Cell*.

brilliant game – a flawed classic that hasn't visibly dated – and one still richly deserving of your attention.

## SILENT SERPENT

To bring you up to speed, *MGS2* is set two years after the events of *Metal Gear Solid*, in which our hero Solid Snake had to infiltrate a hostile installation to prevent his terrorist brother from using a giant nuke-firing robot called Metal Gear Rex. Now, in 2007, the plans for a new amphibious

Metal Gear called 'Ray' (Ray the Robot: if that doesn't strike terror into your hearts...) have been sold to rogue organisations around the world, and Snake (along with his egghead buddy Otacon) has dedicated his life to stopping them. A tip-off has led our heroes to an oil tanker in New York harbour, believed to be transporting a Metal Gear for the US Marines. It's up to you to verify its existence...

If you think that all sounds a bit complicated, you ain't



**"The plot is a confounding web of conspiracies, shadow governments and mind control experiments"**





Raiden, *MGS2*'s surprise lead character, is a bit of a ponce.

seen nothing yet. The plot soon spirals into a confounding web of conspiracies, shadow governments, mind control experiments, even bigger conspiracies, limbs with minds of their own, and deep existential conundrums. The biggest twist, which you've no doubt heard about (tune out now if you've been living under a rock for the past two years), is that Solid Snake apparently dies after only a couple of hours gameplay, leaving you in the shoes of a young upstart called Raiden.

#### RAIDEN ON THE STORM

Nonetheless, the familiar sneak 'em up gameplay remains fundamentally the same. Generally speaking, you've got a level full of bad-ass soldiers with rather poor eyesight, and it's up to you to evade them one by one to reach the next objective, with the help of a radar covered in red enemy dots and blue enemy vision cones.



The new bonus material is enjoyable, but offers little novelty.

Unlike *Splinter Cell*, staying silent and in the shadows is not always imperative here. The soldiers don't have especially acute hearing, and there's no light and shadow system to speak of. It's much more about observing patrol patterns, finding novel ways to distract guards and employing your many gadgets.

To put it another way, *MGS2*'s stealth dynamic is essentially digital, where *Splinter Cell*'s is more analogue. So, while the Tom Clancy sneak 'em up

introduces an element of chance and realism with its light system, sound modelling and organic AI, *MGS2* is more black and white. If you're outside an enemy's vision cone, he can't see you, even if

one system over the other – while *Splinter Cell* tends to be much more tense, *MGS2* has a nice solid 'puzzle' feel to it, where each encounter is a new little conundrum to solve. And then after a few dozen of these you get a full-action boss scenario, some of which are truly outstanding.

Don't forget to dispose of corpses thoughtfully.

#### MOVIE MADNESS

Of course, the sheer fun of solving each little stealthy dilemma cannot be underestimated, especially if you can get through without resorting to brute force – or by using brute force in a particularly

elegance of design, attention to detail and even a little humour.

Unfortunately, it does get bogged down in its own densely convoluted storyline, the core game famously containing almost as much narrative exposition as actual gameplay. *MGS2* desperately wants to be an 'interactive movie', and while the previous game had similar aspirations but got the balance right, in this case the game definitely suffers.

While picking faults, there are one or two technical flaws to mention as well. While on the whole the graphics shine gloriously despite their console origins, we did have some worrying lighting problems with Radeon cards. On the upside, the rumble effects from the PS2 version are in place, and it's definitely worthwhile hunting down a rumbling gamepad for the occasion.

#### THE SUBSTANCE

In essence, this is still the same great but flawed game it was on the PS2. The slow-burning stealth action, while superbly crafted, is far too heavily interspersed with cut-scenes, and no amount of bonus missions, training puzzles or alternative outfits is going to remedy that. The extra material is certainly worthwhile, but there's nothing fundamentally new on show – even the five new 'Snake

**"The whole thing gleams with an elegance of design, detail and even humour"**

you're right next to him. Patrol patterns are simple and repetitive, but knock on a wall and a guard will obediently come to investigate. I'm not espousing

satisfying way (see the boxout below). But apart from that, the game is quite simply very damn cool. The visual style is stunning, and the whole thing gleams with

Tales' are all set in the same game environments.

As a stealth-action game *Substance* has undoubtedly been eclipsed by *Splinter Cell*. But there's no shame in being runner-up a year after initial release, and as an overall experience, its style, elegance and sheer sense of Japanese cool is difficult to top. **[A-]**

### SILENT BUT VIOLENT

YOU SNEAKY, UNDERHAND BASTARD... HERE'S A FEW HANDY WAYS TO DEAL WITH ENEMIES IN *MGS2*



#### THE NECK BREAKER

Relying on absolute stealth and a bit riskier than a shot with a tranq dart, this technique is a timeless favourite. Approach from the rear with no weapon equipped, grab your opponent in a manly embrace and pump the attack button 'til you hear a snapping sound. Don't forget to shake the body afterwards for extra items.



#### THE STICK 'EM UP

For sheer humiliation there's no better tactic than the hold-up, which is also vital for collecting enemy dog tags (an extra-tough challenge that unlocks secret items). Approach a guard from his blindside, level a gun at his vitals and wait for Snake or Raiden to say "Freeze". Aim at his face or bollocks to make him give up his tags.



#### THE CARDBOARD BOX

You're on an elite covert op, equipped with the most advanced gadgetry military tech has to offer. So what do you do? Hide in a cardboard box of course. This brilliant device from *MGS1* makes a welcome return, though it's a lot harder to fool guards this time. Still, when you do pull it off, it's a masterstroke of cartoon absurdity.



#### THE JAZZ MAG

Though more commonly found under teenage beds, this adult item can occasionally be found lying around in *MGS2*, and comes in handy for distracting the game's many sexually frustrated guards. Leave a copy of *Farm Teens* in a soldier's path and when he stumbles upon it he'll drop to his knees and pore over it for hours.

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Incomparably cool and stylish
- ✓ Outstanding visual design
- ✓ Great selection of moves, tricks and gadgets
- ✗ Too many cut-scenes, not enough gameplay
- ✗ Bonus additions are largely insubstantial

# 83

The stylish stealth classic finally hits PC



# GRATHIUS WANTS YOU



"One of the most entertaining and attractive shooters of the next 12 months" **PCZONE** Nov 2002

"Devastation could even give Soldier of Fortune II a run for its money..." **PCGAMER** Aug 2002

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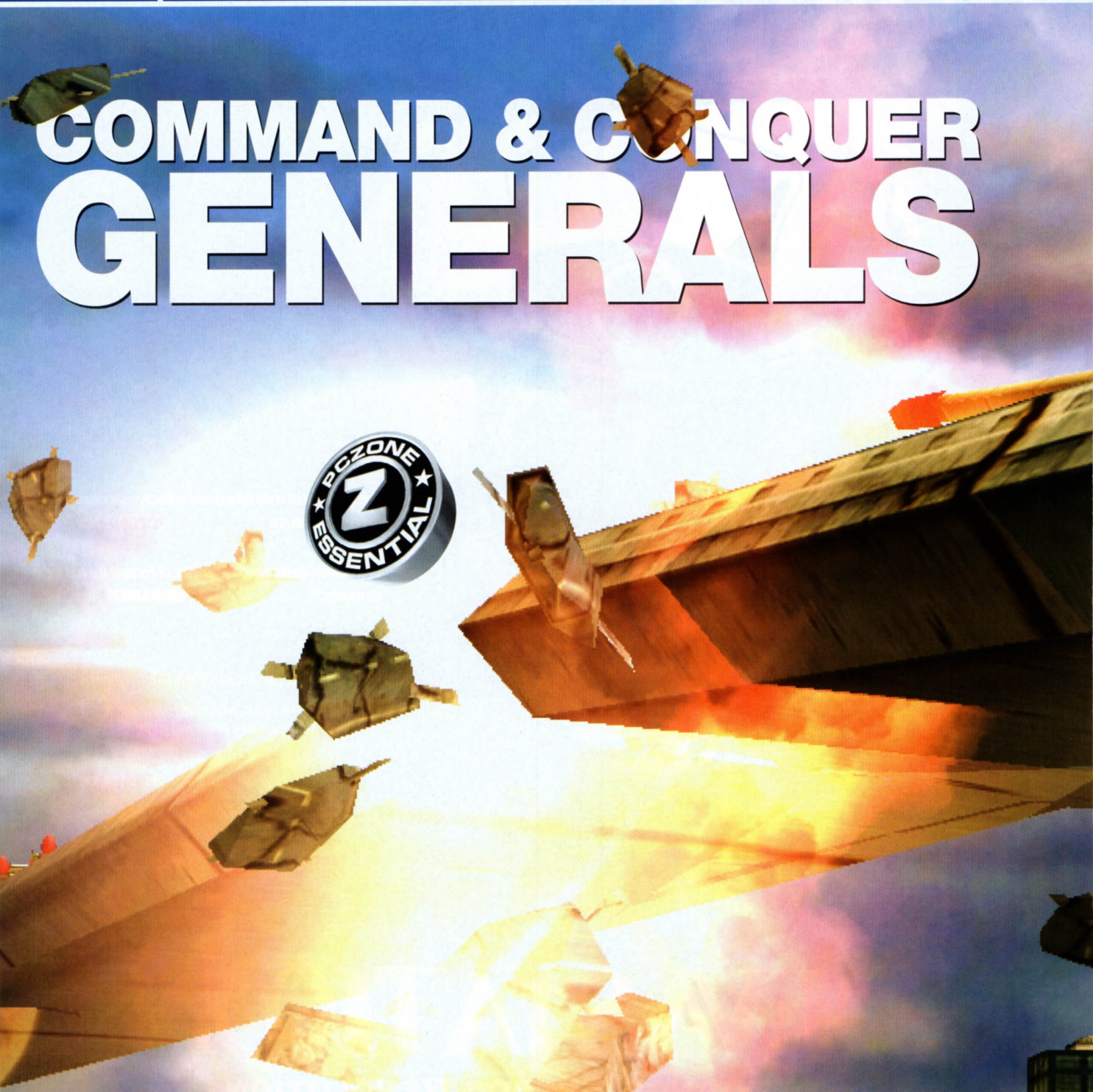


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# COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS



## INPERSPECTIVE

### AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

Reviewed Issue 123, Score 90%

The first 3D outing of another classic RTS series, *Age of Mythology* contains great gameplay and attention to detail, with a surprisingly good storyline. The in-game editor has made it a popular modding choice as well.

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

Reviewed Issue 120, Score 90%

The successor to the stunning *Shogun* contains all the glorious 3D environments and frantic battles of the original, plus new military and diplomatic options played out on a *Risk*-style strategy map.

■ £34.99 | Pub: EA | Dev: EA Pacific/Westwood | ETA: Out Now | [www.generals.ea.com](http://www.generals.ea.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 800, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card **DESIRES** P4 1.8GHz, 256Mb RAM and a GeForce 3 or above

**The RTS giant C&C: *Generals* finally hits PC ZONE and Rhianna Pratchett bravely volunteers for service**

**IF IRAQ** had said to Kuwait back in 1990 "what the hell, keep your oil" instead of invading the small country and giving the world a war it could really get its teeth into, it's unlikely that there would have ever been a *C&C: Generals*.

Had the images of streaking scud missiles, smart bombs delivering pinpoint accurate

destruction and khaki-covered soldiers being sent to their deaths with a smile not been part of our everyday news coverage, then we'd probably still be stuck with 'cha-ching' commando babe Tanya and slap-headed megalomaniacs.

While the original *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert* games dabbled in pseudo-Cold War

and sci-fi themes, *Generals* is very much a product of our time, revolving around a war between three global powers: the US, China and the Global Liberation Army (GLA) played out through a three-part campaign, spanning 27 missions.

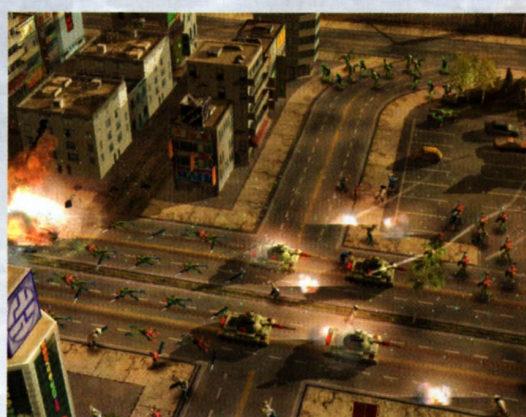
The United States is rather rusty from not having had a good war for 20 years and it

can't wait to remind people just how big and tough it is. China is a technological superpower that uses propaganda and the Internet to fuel its war effort, and the primary reason every one is going to war at all is the nefarious GLA, a terrorist group who are developing weapons of mass destruction. Starting to sound familiar?





There are several different map environments.



Falling towers can be used to crush nearby units.

Those of you that hoped this latest incarnation would mark a major move away from the traditional *Command & Conquer* style are likely to be somewhat disappointed with *Generals*. The FMVs may be gone (to be replaced by slick in-game cut-scenes, which borrow technology from *C&C: Renegade's* 3D

engine) but there's no doubt this is a C&C game through and through.

## "In many ways it's a more accurate portrayal of war than many official news reports"

However, this doesn't mean it's just a brushed up version of *Red Alert 2* with a few new units

chucked in, there's far more happening beneath the surface than that. In fact, there's a lot

more happening on the surface as well, because from a purely graphical perspective and

thanks to the game's new SAGE engine, *Generals* is as beautiful as a Renoir and

as action-packed as a Hollywood blockbuster. Every explosion, from the

nuclear bombs that white out the screen and make you think you've gone blind, to a single unit biting the dust, looks like a miniature movie. When you carpet bomb or drop a nuke, the flying debris, the flames billowing in the wind around the charred remains of your enemy's encampment, really are breathtaking.



## EFFECTS IN THE CITY

While it wasn't much of a looker, the Red Alert series still managed to bring a level of detail to the C&C gaming carpet, such as cities full of civilian life and units hiding themselves in post boxes and litter bins, which made up for its visual shortcomings. *Generals* not only embraces detail in every shape and form, it slow dances to *Lady In Red* with its hand in detail's knickers.

EA Pacific has always been quick to point out the game's interactive environment, where units knock over trees and fences, kick up dust and leave trails behind them. However, this seems like gimmickry when compared to the tiny details you keep noticing out of the corner of your eye, which really add depth to the game.

Neon signs flicker on the sides of buildings, dogs bark in the distance, clouds cast shadows on the ground and there are some details you think you've imagined, like the brief car alarms that go off when your tanks hit them. It's not just the city architecture that's detailed, the developers have created a living, breathing world with a population who run screaming when they're scared, whose bodies burst into flames and fall, writhing and gurgling to the ground after you've just

unleashed a fiery hell upon them. In fact, in many ways *Generals* is a more accurate portrayal of war than many official news reports.

## THE NEW

Gameplay-wise *Generals* seems to have taken a leaf out of the *Age Of* series' book, as the interface has been reassigned to the bottom of the screen and buildings are now built directly onto the battlefield rather than created out of the ether on a side menu and plonked on the map. There's also a little bit of information on each unit, detailing where their particular strengths and weaknesses lie. By now little things like this seem so fundamental to strategy games that you have to wonder why Westwood clung to their antiquated system for so long.

The traditional upgrading mode has been enhanced on several different levels. There are upgrades for some of the buildings and numerous upgrades for the units that endow them with extra weapons, speed and gain attack bonuses. As with previous games, units gain 'veterancy' the longer they fight, however, with the US side, when their tanks and aircraft are shot down, the pilots (who carry the veterancy) emerge and can hop into another vehicle and transfer their skills. Alongside that, as a player you gain



The battles look equally good at night time.



Chinese speaker towers increase the attack of units.



Hack into enemy stockpiles and get fast cash.

promotions based on your performance during the game, which in turn allows you to access new technology.

Resource gathering has been refined as well, so you're no longer worrying so much about little piles of tiberian or gold. Controlling stockpiles and the various civilian buildings like hospitals and oil derricks is still an important part of gameplay, but each side has been given imaginative means of creating resources from inside their own base. The Chinese use hacker units to steal money off the Internet while their supply trucks gather the meatier resources.

Chinooks are the favoured transport method of the US and

they also have supply drops to bring in extra resources. The GLA are very versatile when it comes to bringing in the moola, and use workers to gather from the stockpiles and black markets to boost up their economy. They can also gain resources from the scrap left by burnt-out enemy vehicles.

## THE OLD

But if you're worried that the security blanket you found in the reassuringly samey C&C games has been cruelly ripped from your grasp then don't be, there are still lots of familiar signs in *Generals* that remind you that you're still in the C&C universe.

There are still the chubby pictorials for each unit and

## HEAD TO HEAD

## SO HOW DO THE THREE SIDES STACK UP?

## UNITED STATES

The Yanks are packing high-tech weaponry for the whole of their military; these include Raptors and Stealth Fighters in the air, and Tomahawk Missile Launchers and Paladin Tanks on the ground. Since the Americans like nothing better than making more little Americans, apart from blowing stuff up, one of their unique structures is the detention camp where prisoners are demoralised by constant reruns of *Ricki Lake*, *The Cosby Show* and *I Love Lucy*, until they submit to the all-American way.



## CHINA

These guys just love messing around with things, especially other people's buildings, their units and their money. They have special hacker units, which are costly, but build up resources for the player by deploying their laptops and creaming money off the Internet or planting computer viruses. Their hero unit is Black Lotus, a leather-clad expert hacker who can steal money off enemy supply piles, disrupt units for short periods of time and capture enemy buildings. A talented lady indeed.



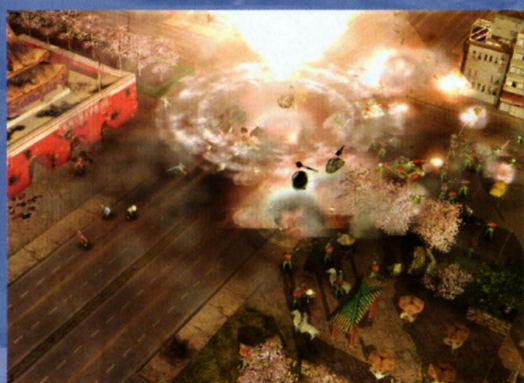
## GLA

The star of this terrorist ragamuffin outfit is sniper



extraordinaire Jamell Kell, whose armour piercing rifle bullets can take out the driver of enemy vehicles and render it useless. Alongside him are the hijacker units who, given half a chance, can jump into an enemy vehicle and take it over. The GLA are particularly big on 'people power' so it's no surprise that not only are their resources collected by peon worker-types, who are always complaining about splinters and pleading to be given shoes, but also, one of their unique units is the angry mob, who can be armed with Molotov cocktails and AK-47s.

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY



Sod the pretty graphics, give us innovations in gameplay.

## GIVE US CHOICES DAMN IT!

Being purely at the mercy of a set of linear missions is getting rather stale now. I'm fed up with developers simply offering up multiple sides and difficulty levels, I'm an intelligent player and I want some sense that I personally have a part to play in the game. Previous Westwood games experimented with this mildly, by allowing players to choose which areas to attack so the gaming experience wasn't always the same, and I'd hoped that *Generals* would offer at least this, if not more. If RTS games like C&C are to evolve further, they need to learn to give the player a bigger role in the development of the game, akin to what *Medieval* strived to do. A commander doesn't just have military choices to make, there are moral ones as well. Human concerns for both the troops and the possible victims of so-called 'collateral damage', so let's see some of that in the gameplay next time.





The GLA launch an anthrax attack on a Baghdad market place.

upgrade, vehicles and troops are still over and undersized against other units and their environment. In the familiar C&C style, every unit announces itself with a quirky little phrase when built or when moving, although this time

by individual heroes for each side: a Vin Diesel-style commando for the US, an über hacker for the Chinese and a deadly sniper for the GLA.

There are new little annoyances though, like the

## "It's very much a product of our time, revolving around a war between three global powers"

there are enough phrases for every unit, which ensures they don't become too repetitive. The building of garrisons has been carried over, as have super-weapons, while Tanya/Boris cameo units have been replaced

fact you can't use more than one unit on a building job, which shows that the franchise still wants to retain the 'C&C way' of doing things in defiance of the rest of the RTS world. But what EA Pacific has retained



GLA troops clear-up after a scud missile attack.



You'll find the Chinese MiGs are some of the most useful troops.

from previous games is carefully chosen and spruced up for *Generals*, such as the always strong skirmish mode in which you have a choice of 24 maps. It doesn't feel so much like you're seeing everything all over again, but more like you've just met up with an old friend that's a hundred times more fanciable than you remember them.

### CONSISTENCY IS THE HOBGOBLIN

As with *Age Of Mythology*, the jump to 3D for a classic RTS series has been pulled off extremely well by C&C *Generals*. In particular it's

good to see that both games have realised the importance of a sophisticated in-game editor to promote the longevity of the games. The editor in *Generals* has already been released online.

As with the expansion of most gaming franchises, C&C, *Age Of*, *SimCity* etc, there's always the fear of straying too far from home and thus risking alienating a long-established fan base.

C&C and the Westwood games were once a pioneering force in strategy gaming and if anyone was in a position to give the gameplay envelope a major shove, then it could, nay should, be them.

Genuine innovation in gaming is a rare and precious thing, and the *Dune* II's, the *SimCities* and the *Dooms* of this world are getting fewer and fewer, as regurgitation becomes an all too frequent development technique. But does the fact that it doesn't stray too far from the familiar make *Generals* any less of a game? Perhaps a little, especially for the genre veterans who've seen it all before too many times and realise what a game this could have been. But, and this is a big



### SECOND OPINION

MARTIN KORDA

C&C. Ahhh, how the memories roll back to a distant era of innovation and excitement, when a new star of strategic radiance broke through the murky clouds of PC strategy gaming uniformity. Ohhh, how the disappointment sets in time and time again when the ever failing twinkle of a once great series diminishes with every passing year and title. And with *C&C: Generals* the star has faded even more. This is simple regurgitated linear build-and-rush gameplay of the most basic sort, cobbled together with a half-decent story and some nice smirk-inducing gimmicks that try to fool you into believing you're playing something new. You're not. But if that's what you're after you'll love *Generals*, adore it in fact, lapping it up until the early hours like a thirsty dog. Everything you know and love from C&C's past – and a little more – is here for you. But if you're after something truly new, then expect to feel the kind of emptiness that only disappointment can bring. One of these days a new star will ascend. When that time will be though, is anybody's guess.

BUT, while *Generals* may not be pushing the boundaries of RTS very far, it is pushing the boundaries of C&C, and for that it must be saluted. While *Age Of Mythology* retained strong gameplay and upped the ante storyline wise, *Generals* has earned its Essential award through sheer level of detail, dribblesome graphics and a game that, above everything else, is extremely good fun to play. **PCZ**

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Amazing special effects, and a smooth 3D world
- ✓ Detail, lots of detail
- ✓ Many more options for developing each side
- ✓ Great fun
- ✗ Linear mission structure
- ✗ Not enough gameplay innovations
- ✗ Needs a high-spec PC

# 86

Gung ho and lovin' it!



The US tanks can be upgraded to have battle drones.





Using stealth is imperative if you're going to survive for any decent length of time.

# IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE

£34.99 | Pub: Codemasters | Dev: Innerloop | ETA: February 21 | [www.codemasters.com/igi2](http://www.codemasters.com/igi2)

REQUIRES PIII 700, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card DESIRES P4 1.2GHz, 512Mb RAM, 64Mb 3D card and an ADSL connection

**Richie Shoemaker is going in again, straight into the sequel of the hit stealth-based FPS**

**THERE IS** a fine line between a first-person shooter that professes to require some stealthy involvement on the part of the player, and a first-person shooter that is simply way too hard to complete without spending most of it hightailing

away from the enemy. The original *Project IGI* straddled that line effortlessly and though it was by way of its own marketing the PC's first 'thinker shooter', it was also a bloody hard game. Despite this, it is credited as being one of the PC's first stealth/action games, which is as meaningless as it is inaccurate. Nonetheless, the sequel is here and you will forgive me if I don't start cartwheeling naked about the place and whooping with joy (*Forgive you? I'd rather you avoided doing so at all costs – Ed*), but I'm not particularly impressed with it.

## GOING IN

For those who missed the pioneering original, *IGI2* sees the return of Dave Jones, an ex-SAS special forces operative who likes nothing better than to infiltrate terrorist bases on behalf of the Institute for Geotactical Intelligence (and you thought *IGI*



"Right, which one of you snowflakes gets it first."

meant something else). In this particular adventure Jones is chasing stolen computer chips across the world, a journey that begins in Russia and ends in China, via Libya, some 19 rather large missions later.

As in the first game, you work alone, which seeing as you're far from superhuman, requires you to remain undetected for as long as possible. Your most important bit of kit is the trusty Map Computer, which though unable to point out security cameras, is very capable at highlighting where the enemy patrols are. As well as binoculars, you have infrared goggles, which turn the enemy into bright yellow mannequins – and of course a healthy spread of weapons.

## TINKY WINKY GRRR

Technically speaking, *IGI 2* is, as you would expect, quite a significant improvement on 2000's *Project IGI*, and since I

## INPERSPECTIVE

### NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

Reviewed Issue 122, Score 93%

The fact this has its tongue stuck firmly in its cheek just shows up the fact that *IGI 2* – and its main character especially – takes itself far too seriously. For FPS fans after some stealth to go with their action, there is no better game on the PC. *IGI 2*, we're sorry to say, doesn't even come close.

### SPLINTER CELL

Reviewed Issue 125, Score 94%

This superb third-person game has more in the way of espionage than outright action, but for spy capers it's by far the best example on offer today.





PC ZONE's editor makes a cameo appearance as an angry yet amorous guardsman.

very much enjoyed the original game – despite its many shortcomings, you may think it strange that *IGI 2* leaves me somewhat cold. The AI is markedly improved, the levels more varied in that they include North African settings as well as the relative drabness of Eastern Europe, the arsenal of weapons has of course been extended and there is even a full multiplayer mode where before there was none. You can even – get this – save the game

during a mission. In fact, you could say developer Innerloop has very nearly fixed everything that was wrong with the original game.

Well, not quite everything. Again the graphics are most impressive when you stand atop a hill looking down into an enemy base and beyond, yet as in the original, the interiors are drab and empty. The characters, though considerably smarter than they were in the first game (which was pretty smart), are

about as convincing in their movements as the cast of *Thunderbirds*.

#### SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Since the original game, which was undoubtedly a breath of fresh air when it first arrived, many titles have furthered the concept of an

**“The characters are about as convincing in their movements as the cast of *Thunderbirds*”**

## OVERT COUNTER-STRIKE

### IGI GETS A MULTIPLAYER GAME AT LAST

*IGI 2* doesn't do indoors well, but its outdoor settings are well suited to online play, with hilltop bases overlooking deep river valleys. It looks wonderful. Of course being what you might call a sneak 'em up, there are many places to hide – too many in fact, making *IGI 2* a pretty dull multiplayer game for action fans. The multiplayer mode closely mirrors the *Counter-Strike* template, with two sides either defending or attacking a series of mission objectives. Considering the variety of the terrain, the game manages to keep up with the online traffic rather well. The problem is there's nothing here that hasn't been done before. Quite frankly, we'd have much preferred a co-operative option for the single-player campaign.



Don't go in there, it's much nicer out here.



You can pick up enemy weapons.



The view turns to third-person when picking locks.



“Have some of this you scum.”



“Now don't do it again, you hear me?”

action-based game where thought and careful planning are as important as firepower and itchy trigger fingers. With the exception of perhaps *Soldier Of Fortune II*, whose stealth-based missions are a bit of a cop-out, *IGI 2* just feels like it has been left behind, not least by the recent camp spy sequel *No One Lives Forever 2*, a game far more sophisticated when it comes to sneaking around. Plus, you can climb through windows and hide dead bodies – prerequisite skills that *IGI*'s returning hero has great difficulty with.

Perhaps the developers have been looking so hard at their own game that they failed to notice the competition creep

up behind them. For as much as *IGI 2* is a sequel, it also at times seems little more than an upgrade. **PCZ**

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Beautiful and large outdoor levels
- ✓ *Counter-Strike*-style multiplayer game
- ✓ Impressive AI
- ✗ Awful interiors
- ✗ Poor character animation
- ✗ Repetitive missions

# 77

**More of an upgrade than a sequel**





A German guard tower goes down under the weight of numbers.

# PRAETORIANS

£34.99 | Pub: Eidos | Dev: Pyro Studios | ETA: February 28 | [www.pyrostudios.com](http://www.pyrostudios.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 500, 128 Mb RAM and a 16 Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 800, 256 Mb RAM and a 32 Mb 3D card

Everyone said **Steve O'Hagan** was the best man to review this Roman RTS, as he has a legion of admirers



## INPERSPECTIVE

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

Reviewed Issue 120, Score 90%

More tactical, more visceral and ultimately more compelling.

*Medieval: Total War* does away with resources and puts your troops into rigid formations, but to better effect, and with a glorious campaign mode.

### CAESAR III

Reviewed Issue: 70, Score 92%

OK, so this city building sim is a totally different kettle of fish, but those looking to recreate some of the feel of Roman times, and have an utterly engrossing experience while they are at it, need look no further.

**OF ALL** the empires to have straddled this globe, it is perhaps the Roman that is the most widely admired. Having given such advancements to this nation as running water, a straight road from London to Peterborough and all-night orgies, there's much to thank our ancient Italian imperialist cousins for. Of course, the fact that those of our ancestors that weren't fed to the lions ended up hand-feeding grapes to lardy landowners as house slaves tends to get obscured in our rose-tinted recollection.

Regardless, joining the list of bounties bequeathed to us by Pax Romana, although somewhat belatedly, comes *Praetorians*, a nice little tactical RTS from the same Spanish

developers who brought us the *Commandos* series. A game all the more timely given the unveiling of the fantastic-looking *Rome: Total War* from the makers of *Medieval* and *Shogun*, due out hopefully at the end of this year. The question is, has *Praetorians* ambushed Creative Assembly's latest project, defeating it even before it could

**"The 20-odd mission campaign is like a whirlwind tour of the ancient known world"**

reach the field of battle? Or has the announcement of the latest *Total War* meant that *Praetorians'* reign will be a mighty short one? Only careful reading of the following four pages will tell.

That or a quick look at the verdict box at the end.

### MILITARY MATTERS

*Praetorians*, like *Medieval* before it, does away with traditional RTS resource gathering, and arrays your troops into permanently fixed formations. There's no need to constantly research new technologies to

tip the battle in your favour, and you don't have to worry about picking berries and mining iron, leaving you free to fret solely about military affairs. Which, in our book, is no bad thing.

The 20-odd mission campaign is like a whirlwind tour of the ancient known world. Starting out in Gaul where the local tribes are getting restless, it's soon on through Belgium and into Britain for a battle or two. Next up is Germany, home of many a ferocious barbarian tribe, and then on to the Middle East and North Africa before returning for a climactic showdown in Rome itself. There are three distinct forces represented in the game, the Romans, the Gauls and the Egyptians, and you get to command troops from each of them along the way.

### VIEWFINDER GENERAL

The viewpoint in *Praetorians* is somewhere between isometric 2D and full 3D. You can raise or





lower the angle of the camera which works as a basic, but somewhat throw-away zoom function, and the direction the camera faces is always fixed. For the most part, this works fine, as it prevents the confusion that a fully 3D engine can create. But on occasions, such as when you want to rotate and see where the ladders are on the other side of a wall, it can feel a little constricted.

Your troops are organised into units of anything between 16 and 40 or so men. You can divide a formation into two, combine two smaller ones, or balance the numbers between two of differing strength.

Supporting these larger formations are a number of specialised units. In every

mission you will have at least one commander, useful for recruiting new soldiers in villages as well as bestowing a combat bonus on nearby troops. Physicians and druids are also on hand to heal the wounded, and scouts are there to keep an eye out for the enemy. And, lest we forget, a small variety of siege engines and primitive artillery such as catapults can be called upon. But more on this later.

#### THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

As mentioned earlier, there is no resource gathering in *Praetorians*, which is not to say that there are no resources. In fact, almost every mission (as well as multiplayer encounters and skirmish battles) revolves



Better burn that siege tower down soon, or there'll be all kinds of barbarians on your ramparts.



Keeping someone back at the homestead is a good idea, we've all seen Gladiators...



The blue rings show the command radius of your centurians. Troops within it will fight better.



## MISSED OPPORTUNITY



Sadly, *Praetorians*' campaign funnels you down a route.

### WE'RE SEASONED CAMPAIGNERS – SO WHERE'S THE DYNAMISM?

We're all familiar with the many campaigns of the Romans as they set about converting most of Western Europe and the Mediterranean to red wine and mid-meal puking. From the painful conquest of Gaul, to the campaigns in the Holy Land, it was as much the alliances and manoeuvring made off the battlefield as the bloodletting on it that gave them their success. And you can't help but want to be involved on this kind of strategic level, deciding where the next battle will be, and on what terrain you will choose to fight. But here missions chop and change from Britain, to Turkey and back again, with you getting no choice in what comes next. The campaign structure is that of an arcade game – you finish one level and qualify for the next. OK, so it needn't have been as comprehensive as *Medieval*, but a little dynamism in the campaign structure would have been nice.

around a number of villages. Once a village is captured and garrisoned, you can use it to recruit new formations. Units take differing amounts of time to assemble and some also require you to spend 'honour points' you have acquired in battle.

While this recruitment reduces the population of the village, it slowly regenerates, in effect meaning each offers an inexhaustible amount of men. The problem is, if your enemy has more or bigger villages than you, then he will be reinforcing quicker, so you'll need to engineer a decisive battle to tip the scales. It's a novel way to approach matters in an RTS, although slightly reminiscent of *Z: Steel Soldier's* 'the more you conquer the more reinforcements you generate' approach.

There'll come a time when you need some siege ladders, a catapult or two, or even a bridge being rebuilt, which is where your auxiliaries come in. These troops function on one level as basic infantry. But it's in their role as combat engineers that they really excel. With a small amount of battlefield DIY, some of the number from a unit of auxiliaries (or their Gaullic and Egyptian equivalents) can be turned over to the construction of siege weapons, as well as defensive towers and bridges.



The advantage of German cavalry is that they can negotiate wooded terrain.

### MORAL HIGH GROUND

Terrain is all-important in *Praetorians*, for line of sight and for combat modifiers. The maps are effectively 'two storey', meaning there's ground level and high ground. All high ground is somewhat unrealistically walled off by cliffs, apart from certain access points. Troops on high ground can see down, but those below them can't see up. Those

with the benefit of elevation can also fire arrows further and to more deadly effect, and those defending at close quarters receive a combat bonus. All of which means, possession of the high ground is paramount, as is scouting out the hilltops you don't own with your eagle scouts (see Boy Scouts boxout).

Wooded terrain poses a similar problem. Units outside

of forests cannot see in, and even if they wanted to, many such as cavalry, spearmen and siege engines cannot venture in at all. And what with the Gaullic propensity for concealing large numbers of troops in the trees, you're going to have to check out every sizeable wood for danger before your troops can pass by safely. Or send in the wolf scout (again, see boxout).

All of which means that simply advancing through unfriendly terrain blindly is a really bad idea, placing an onus

## "You're going to have to check out every sizeable wood for danger"



You've got to lug your siege weapons across the map when walls need breaking down.



## BOY SCOUTS

### FINDING OUT WHAT'S OVER THE HORIZON IS VITAL

*Praetorians* places a great deal of emphasis on reconnaissance, which forces you into a nice, considered approach to things. Reflecting this, two of your most important units are the eagle and wolf scouts.

The eagle scout unit is a solitary dude who has some kind of telepathic relationship with his bird of prey. Select the scout, click on the area you want to scope out, and then sit back as your bird soars overhead, peeling back the fog of war to reveal anything in the vicinity not concealed under tree cover.

The wolf scout works in a similar way by sending out his lupine buddy to whatever forest you need scouting. Once the beast arrives, any hostile troops lying in wait will be revealed, allowing your archers to flush them out, or if you prefer, your lighter infantry to go in and do the job with a personal touch.



Hello sailor...

on reconnaissance. Bowman on higher ground, and ambushing clumps of Gaul berserkers hidden in the woods make any rash advances costly, believe us.

### IMPERIAL LEATHERING

On the visual front, *Praetorians* does its job admirably and to a relatively low spec. Trees gently

sway, rain and snow fall, deer graze, birds burst from trees when troops pass below – it's not mind-blowing by any means, but it more than suffices. It only really lets itself down when the battles get larger, as clashing formations seem to condense into tight balls of screaming combatants, meaning you can't

tell friend from foe, let alone who's winning.

By eschewing non-military matters such as resource gathering and research, a big emphasis is placed on the battles being sufficiently spectacular and tactically absorbing to keep you satisfied. Which is probably where it falls

short of being up there with the classics of the genre.

All the units in *Praetorians* have specific jobs, and many require more than a little micromangement to wring the best out of them. Spearmen are deadly in defence against cavalry, but you have to click a button to put them into stationary mode first, creating a wall of raised spears. Legionnaires can advance practically impervious to archery using the turtle formation button, but they fight less effectively like this, so you have to unclick it when they approach their target.

### SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Getting used to each unit's strengths and weaknesses is an enjoyable experience, but after a solid day's play, piecing together each mission's tactical jigsaw becomes a little repetitive. The presence of unit-generating villages means these become the focus of any strategy, as he who owns the most villages wins.

To increase the challenge as you progress, *Praetorians* falls back on making the maps bigger and your enemies more numerous. Which leads to a number of problems. Not only do you lose sight of where everyone is and what they were supposed to be doing, but even keeping your forces in any sort of formation becomes nigh on impossible. Battles soon become unruly wars of brawling attrition. And this has the double knock on of you not being able to correctly micromanage your troops, as well as you losing the aesthetic and tactical pleasure of watching opposing armies in tight formations, clashing in spectacular style as you do in *Medieval*.

The upshot is that those addicted to the *Medieval* style of martial splendour and battlefield finesse will feel disappointed



The spearmen in front of the gate are in stationary mode – but they're deadly in defence.

## WALKTHROUGH →

**SLOWLY DOES IT** Like brewing Grolsch, you can't rush things in *Praetorians*. You need to scout out the terrain and prepare your forces for each enemy encounter



**1** You need to advance through a valley. The way up ahead is out of view so you send your hawk up to get an aerial view. The bird reveals a substantial enemy force.



**2** Deploying troops correctly is crucial. Your legionnaires are to the fore, your spearmen are dug in on the flank, and your archers are to the rear in stationary mode.



**3** Your centurion is in the centre of your formation to keep him safe while he bestows combat bonuses, and cavalry are kept in reserve for when the attack begins.



**4** The enemy appears and your missile weapons take a heavy toll. But your cavalry race around the back of the enemy, where they decimate the archers and the chieftain.



## SECOND OPINION

MARTIN KORDA

A year ago, when I first saw *Praetorians*, I was visibly excited. In fact, so stirred was I, that I almost smiled.

The prospect of siege warfare and huge battles over a rolling 3D landscape had my heart skipping like a five-year-old girl playing hop-scotch. That was 12 months ago. Since then though, we've seen the likes of *Medieval: Total War* and *Warrior Kings* change the face of RTS gaming forever, meaning that a year on, *Praetorians* is left looking decidedly ordinary by comparison. Its attempt at 3D is foiled by a restrictive camera, and the troops and formations look messy, especially when the action really kicks off. However, the novel approach to managing resources and emphasis on combat and large armies does lend it a sense of the grandiose, and as RTS games go, it stands up well to much of the competition.

My main gripe with it though, is that it's completely soulless. It fails to excite, vex or challenge you in any notable way, and levels can often become somewhat of a routine chore as a result. There's better out there and better to come, but if you're into large battles and minimum resource management then you could also do a hell of a lot worse.

with the slightly strategy-lite style of *Praetorians*. But the flipside is that those who find *Medieval* a little heavy and prefer something a little more pacy and intuitive will find much to enjoy here. Which is one of a number of reasons why we think *Praetorians* deserves a good score. Even if it is looking over its shoulder at *Rome: Total War*. **PC2**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Easy to get into
- ✓ Interesting resource system
- ✓ Good use of scouts
- ✓ Relatively low spec
- ✗ Battles become unmanageable
- ✗ Lacks a little tactical depth

# 80

Nice little RTS, without being a groundbreaker





Ambushing infantry will hurl grenades at passing tanks in the hope they'll get a lucky result.

# GI COMBAT

£29.99 | Pub: Strategy First | Dev: Freedom Games |  
ETA: March 4 | [www.gicombat.com](http://www.gicombat.com)

REQUIRES PIII 500, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card DESIRES PIII 1GHz, 256Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card

**Somebody just put the 'real' back into real-time strategy.**  
**Steve O'Hagan screams incoming and takes cover**

**IT'S OFTEN** said that the first casualty of war is the plan. And after a game of *GI Combat*, you'll believe it. There you are, your squads deployed for a flanking manoeuvre of the enemy positions on the nearby ridge. But no sooner have your troops started crawling toward their objectives, than an enemy sniper takes out your company commander. Next, artillery fire splits up your leading infantry from their platoon HQs, and when this leaderless mob is raked with machine gun fire, they turn turkey and run screaming, leaving half their number behind.

Make no mistake, what we have here is no pick-up-and-play, click-and-drag RTS. In *GI Combat*, the latest title from the brains behind the classic *Close Combat* series, every mission presents a sophisticated tactical challenge that only careful co-ordination of all the means at your disposal will overcome.

You command either German or American troops clashing in the aftermath of the 1944 Normandy landings. Lightly armed US Airborne troops tackle SS panzers, and American Rangers storm up cliffs to assault German garrison troops in fortified bunkers.

You can play one-off clashes, a series of battles linked into an operation or a longer campaign where you spend points before each mission to customise your force. Once each battle has begun, you're on your own – don't expect any reinforcements.

## ZONING OUT

Missions play out on fully 3D maps where you can zoom down among the ditches and hedgerows to get the grunt's eye-view, or sweep up for an elevated perspective to observe

and refuse to obey orders. Shouted commands are drowned out by the screams of the wounded and the whistle of shells – this is not the *Commando* comic book war of *Sudden Strike*. This is the gritty, realistic *Band Of Brothers* version of events, so visceral it's liable to induce flashbacks in an unwary veteran.

## WAR MONGERING

For the WWII buff, there's much to enjoy. The maps are based on military charts of the region and the list of weapons is massive, with each modelled to perform accurately. Mortars, flame-throwers, bazookas, demolition charges and rifle grenades do battle with tanks, half-tracks and armoured cars, not to mention air strikes and naval bombardments.

But for all its endeavour, *GI Combat* is far from the classic it

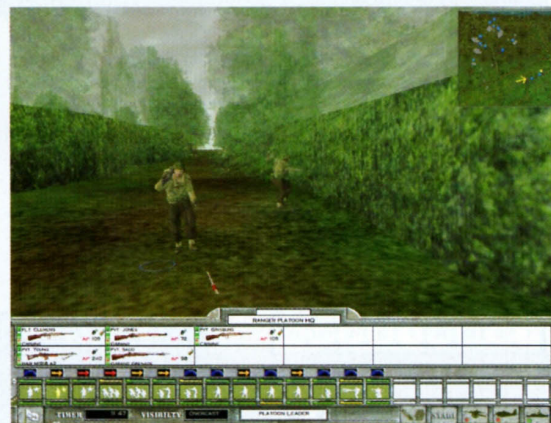
**"When bullets are flying and shells are falling it evokes the maelstrom of combat well"**

the ebb and flow of the battle. OK, so the animations may be limited and the vehicles a little crude, but when bullets are flying, shells falling and troops and tanks are manoeuvring for position, it evokes the maelstrom of combat well. Troops panic

could have been. The main fault lies in the ungainly interface, trying to manoeuvre your squads and the camera at the same time leads to disorientation, and a context sensitive mouse pointer is badly needed to help simplify the orders system.



Heavy machine guns can devastate on-rushing troops.



Every line of advance has to be checked for ambush points.



*GI Combat* simulates company-level operations.

The behaviour of individual soldiers in your squads can also irritate. Troops told to defend a house will often spill out into the garden, or not find a window to fire through. And crucial team members such as the machine gunner can be positioned without a field of fire. Enemy

All of this will no doubt be corrected in patches or *GI Combat II*. And when it is, it'll be a seriously good game. **P2**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Authentic units and weapon behaviour
- ✓ Tactically challenging
- ✓ Conveys the chaos of battle
- ✗ Unwieldy interface
- ✗ AI is a little dumb

# 71

**Potentially fantastic, but currently lacking**

## INPERSPECTIVE

### COMBAT MISSION 2

Reviewed Issue 123, Score 69%  
A realistic 3D WWII turn-based strategy game. Worth checking out.

### SUDDEN STRIKE II

Reviewed Issue 120, Score 72%  
If you're looking for more simplified Nazi-bashing, this RTS is the one.



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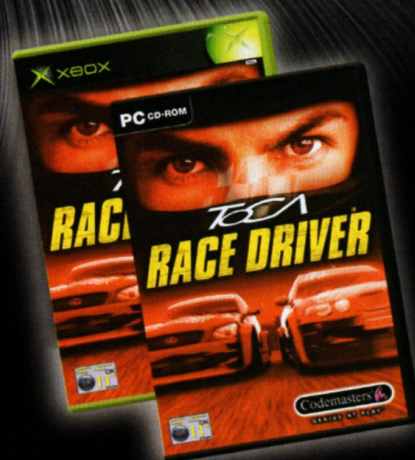


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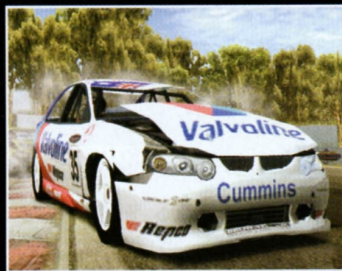
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# TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD

■ £29.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Red Storm Montreal | ETA: March 21  
[www.raven-shield.com](http://www.raven-shield.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 800, 128Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card **DESIRES** P4 1.4Ghz, 256Mb RAM and a 128Mb 3D card

**The thinking man's shooter is back. Mark Hill meditates...**



If you're going to get teammates killed, make sure they're rookies.



Anyone in a shirt like that deserves to die. Open fire!

## INPERSPECTIVE

### GHOST RECON

Reviewed Issue 127, Score 84%

*Rainbow Six* goes for open spaces, swapping counter-terrorism for military operations. And it's mostly a success, thanks to a great command interface and some original touches.

### SWAT 3

Reviewed Issue 97, Score 89%

Provided a refreshing change by shifting the attention from globe-trotting counter-terrorism to national, more police-oriented problems. The command system is more complex than *Raven Shield's*, but it does let you take more control during the missions.

**IN OCTOBER** last year 50 Chechen rebels stormed a Russian theatre during a musical and held the audience and cast hostage, threatening to detonate the explosives strapped to their chests if their demands weren't met. The siege lasted three days, during which the captives were forced to sleep in their chairs and relieve themselves in the orchestra pit (well, at least they hadn't gone to see *We Will Rock You*). After all negotiations had broken down, Russian special forces released a powerful nerve gas into the auditorium, killing all the terrorists. They also managed to kill more than a

hundred of the hostages, yet President Putin had the gall to pronounce the operation a success. He's obviously never played a *Rainbow Six* game.

If it had been *Raven Shield*, it would have been 'Mission Failed' the second a hostage bit

tweaking their waypoints and dithering over whether Light Black Cammo was really the most appropriate dress code.

### OVER THE RAINBOW

If you haven't experienced a *Rainbow Six* title before, you

shooter, it set down some golden rules: tension, realism, in-depth planning and a by-the-book approach to every aspect of counter-terrorism. It was too hardcore for the masses, a fact not helped by the high difficulty level and horrendous graphics.

**"This is not a game for trigger-happy thrill-seekers, nor for those of little patience"**

the dust. But of course, if life were like a computer game, the Russian authorities would have had 87 attempts, each time going back to the drawing board, pondering their mistakes,

should know these are not games for trigger-happy thrill-seekers (try some *Unreal II* action instead), nor for people of little patience. When Red Storm invented the tactical team

But it found a huge audience nonetheless – one hankering for a slower, more thoughtful shooter, where one shot kills and even the simple matter of opening a door practically



requires four meetings and a report filed in triplicate.

And while the hard-as-nails, ultra-realistic method is still firmly in place, *Raven Shield* has had an *Unreal* engine facelift and no longer looks like it was beaten with an ugly – and exaggeratedly polygonal – stick.

### DIE ANOTHER WAY

The setup will be familiar to most people: get briefed on a terrorist situation, choose your men and the equipment they'll use (from a choice of more than 40 weapons to heartbeat sensor gadgets), and ignore the incredibly complex planning screen. Wait a minute, though, it seems something has changed there too. Gone is the deeply ugly, completely unfathomable planning stage of old, replaced by an easier to use and to understand screen.

For most of us though, the missions work something like this: move very slowly through the level, learning the usual position of the terrorists and which rooms need particular care, while dying a lot. Dying an awful lot. Get that little bit further while dying some more. Tear your eyes out in frustration and then die some more. As it only takes one bullet to die, it's a common occurrence. And because you have a finite number of really good team members, you don't want to lose any of the best. So you try again, and then die some more.

### TESTING POSITIVE

Not that this is a bad thing, necessarily, as it helps create an incredible amount of tension. This is one of the few games that can make you feel genuinely nervous. Standing outside a door behind which is a sniper is like waiting at the doctor's for important test results. You pause. You wipe the sweat from your palms on your trousers. You take a deep breath and a slug from your glass of water (constantly refilled to soothe the succession of dry throats you'll get). You build up the courage to start slicing the door open. You see a surprised face. There's shouting, gunfire – the screen goes deepest black and you throw your head back with a howl of deep despair.

But the death of your own men isn't the most frustrating thing that can



**Top tip #1:** Shoot the men with guns, spare the men in suits.

happen – it's the death of a hostage that will really get your goat. The terrorists in *Raven Shield* don't believe in keeping

them alive if they spot you, so every hostage rescue mission (which most of them are) has the added frustration of trying to

## HOW A PLAN COMES TOGETHER

### ONE OF THE MOST IMPROVED AREAS OF RAVEN SHIELD GOES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

After equipping your team with fully customisable weapons (attach scopes to machine guns and heat sensors to sniper rifles) and all manner of gadgets, it pays to spend some time planning your missions. Especially now this aspect of the game has been improved so much. You can even watch a preview of your whole route in a 3D box in the corner before you approve it.

If you're anything like me though, you'll skip this bit to just get on with the shooting or, if you're finding a level too hard to take without co-ordinated attacks, you can load up one of the default plans. Still, there's no greater joy for some than planning an assault to the tiniest detail, setting up waypoints and scheduling flashbangs like a record-breaking line of dominoes, before taking a back seat during the action to watch it all unfold. You can keep up with what other teams are doing elsewhere on the level by bringing up a detailed map, giving go-aheads when they've reached the correct position and making sure it all goes to plan.



It looks complicated, but it's not that hard to use.





The occasional terrorist will give himself up.

keep the sods alive. Between that and the drive to keep your best men from dying, you can expect to play most levels between 10-20 times. And there's 15 of 'em.

And, even though the position of some of the enemies is random – making things just that little bit more exciting and difficult – that doesn't mean things can't get repetitive.

#### AMERICAN PIE

At least you do get a variety of locations to thwart terrorism in,

from picturesque Norwegian and Swiss mountain towns, to South American airports and mansions. There's even a level set in a London bank, involving some nail-biting stealth moments. The *Unreal* technology improves the series no end aesthetically, but apart from the detailed models, there is a bare, boxy look to most of the environments, and you are unlikely to be distracted from the work at hand by looking around and admiring the view.

But there are more important things to admire, like the feel of



The heartbeat sensor is superb in the harder stealth levels.

the weapons, which are great, and the little details such as footprints left in the snow (which are useful for tracking down enemies). You can even watch as they are slowly covered by a fresh downfall.

The way you can open doors bit by bit using the mouse wheel



If you see enemies this close, it means you're about to die.

sum *Raven Shield* up. But it's not to say you can't make things easier on yourself. Turn the difficulty level down to rookie, use the auto-aiming option or load a default plan and let the AI do all the work. But then that would be cheating, and you won't get anywhere near the level of satisfaction you do when you beat a level by yourself.

It's a shame *Raven Shield* hasn't taken some of the better ideas of *Ghost Recon*, like the RPG point system, the unlocking of specialists and a more detailed command interface. It would also be nice to get more feedback on where the enemies are, rather than just being told one has been spotted.

Special mention should go to Kevin Sweeney, the man

And delegating tasks via this interface is key to your success. Getting someone else to open a door, throw a grenade in and clear the room out is often easier than doing it yourself. Especially in light of the razor-sharp enemy AI. I know these are supposed to be trained terrorists, but at times

**"It's a serious business. But if you're up to the challenge, the rewards are well worth it"**

## A GATHERING OF RAVENS

### SLOWER DOESN'T MEAN WORSE FOR MULTIPLAYER

*Rainbow Six* has always had a cult following online (particularly in South Korea, for some reason) and that appeal can only widen with *Raven Shield*. It's very different from *Counter-Strike* in that it's much slower and less reliant on fast reflexes. But tactical awareness and the use of tear gas, gas masks and heartbeat sensors (including a device that gives off false readings), as well as the usual silencers, grenades and scopes make it quite a special prospect.

So far we've only been able to play the test demo that is freely available, and that is sadly riddled with bugs and some seriously heavy lag. But the mixture of co-operative, survival and team modes make it one to watch out for. We'll bring you a full multiplayer review as soon as the game goes on sale.



Let's hope they get the lag sorted.

(slicing the pie is the technical term, greenhorns) becomes second nature after a while and, although the number of commands you can give your team on the go is limited, the interface is very simple and intuitive. Point to the floor, a door, window or ladder and you'll get an icon telling you which commands are available.

It feels like they're using every *Counter-Strike* cheat in the book. Snipers in particular seem to know precisely when your head is about to pop round a corner. One quick peek and you get one right between the eyes.

#### BY GUM IT'S GRIM

So, tense, infuriating, enjoyable and bloody hard would seem to

charged with giving you the psychological side of each mission briefing, since he sports a hilarious Yorkshire accent. He sounds like an American trying to blend in at an Emmerdale convention. But other than that, *Raven Shield* is a serious business. If you're up to the challenge, the rewards are well worth it. Just don't say we didn't warn you. [X]



"Uhh, sir – why don't you go first for once in a lifetime?"

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Great presentation and overall design
- ✓ Very tense and atmospheric
- ✓ Satisfyingly tactical
- ✗ Exasperatingly hard
- ✗ Can become repetitive
- ✗ Boxy levels

# 84

**Tough, frustrating but utterly compelling**



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PlayStation 2



PC  
CD  
ROM



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Official Indiana Jones website  
[www.indianajones.com](http://www.indianajones.com)





A B-17, yesterday.

## FIGHTER ACE 3.5

■ £19.99 | Pub: Jaleco Entertainment | Dev: Jaleco Entertainment  
| ETA: Out Now

**REQUIRES** PIII 500, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**DESIRES** PIII 800, 512Mb RAM, 64Mb RAM and an ADSL connection

**Paul Presley throws his chocks away, whatever they are**



**BACK IN THE** day, a long time ago, I was fortunate enough to be a member of the *Air Warrior III* community. It wasn't a big community, and I'm certain the likes of Chalfont St Peter's could have given our rugby team a good run for its money

any day of the week, but it was a happy community.

The game was massively multiplayer, long before that term had taken its cancerous grip on our lives, and based in the arena of World War II air combat. And it rocked – as they say.

But then it died. For no good reason other than corporate ambition. The same firm had a more simplistic WWII flight sim in its catalogue which was selling better. So *AWIII* died and with it

Nearly as good as *Virtual Skipper 2*!

some of the finest multiplayer gaming experiences I'd ever had (you haven't lived until you and seven other humans man the guns of a single B-17 on a bombing run).

But it's back! Well, not exactly back, but its spirit lives on in *Fighter Ace 3.5*, a massively multiplayer World War II air combat sim for the next generation (as they probably also say). It looks the biz, it plays exactly as you hope it does –

even better than the much hyped *World War II Online* did/does, and best of all it doesn't have any pretensions about what it is. It's simply a community of flight sim fans getting together and having fun the only way they know how. Total class. **PC**

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**85**

**Gaming the way it  
should be**

## WAR AND PEACE

■ £29.99 | Pub: Microids | Dev: Microids | ETA: Out Now

**REQUIRES** PIII 800MHz, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**DESIRES** PIII 1GHz, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**And Steve O'Hagan thought those BBC costume dramas were bad**

**IF WE ARE** truthful, few among us can lay claim to having enjoyed Leo Tolstoy's epic novel that shares the name of this historical RTS. And hopefully few

RTS that pits you as one of six major European empires. The game's crude 3D engine models the entire world, with some 180 cities to be fought over. But in

Humdrum is a keyword. Resources in the shape of gold and men have to be gathered to pay for your construction and to fill your army's ranks. Cities need to be expanded through construction trees that are about as innovative as Gareth Gates. Hospitals heal, universities research and factories produce. And farms produce manpower for your army, apparently.

Your units are drawn as microscopic little smudges on the bland terrain, and can be placed in lines, columns or squares. Each has a special

**"Your units are drawn as microscopic little smudges"**

among us will lay claim to having played this game, as like its literary namesake, it's mammoth, impenetrable and dull.

Set in the era of Napoleon, *War And Peace* is a grand-scale

taking such a whale-sized bite of RTS pie, the game nearly chokes, giving you far too much to think about while not providing the necessary tools in the way of a decent interface to deal with it all.



We've had more fun in prison.

attack, with cannons able to fire in barrages and cavalry able to mount a charge. But battles boil down to simple click-and-drag affairs centered around one of your cities, where both sides throw everything they've got into the fray, and see who's left standing at the end.

Having the world laid out in front of you in full 3D to fight over

is great in concept, but the horrible interface makes giving the right orders to the right units at the right time in the right place an absolute nightmare. Just don't bother.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**10**

**Bloody dire**



# AIRSTRIKE 3D: OPERATION W.A.T.

■ US\$17.95 (from [www.divogames.com](http://www.divogames.com)) | Pub: Divo Games |  
Dev: Divo Games | ETA: Out Now

**REQUIRES** PII 333, 64Mb RAM and a 3D card

**DESIRES** PII 400, 64Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**3D aerial combat? Scott Steinberg volunteers to get high**



A sneak preview of Iraq, six months from now.



Never ease off the trigger – it's the difference between life and death.

**SO MAN** wasn't meant to fly – we'll settle with raining death down from the heavens instead. Just another day in the world of *AirStrike 3D: Operation W.A.T.*, an oh-so-adorable helicopter shooter moulded in the vein of yesteryear's arcade classics. It just goes to prove a point: while whippersnappers won't appreciate the subtle nuances of shoving a homing missile

up an enemy's cornhole, such antics should have a lot of you nostalgic codgers cackling with senile glee.

One line suffices to sum this sucker up: *Raiden* meets *Nuclear Strike*. Or, in long-winded form, play sees you gleefully collecting weapon power-ups (spread shot, lasers, etc), multiple missile add-ons and score bonuses while blowing air, ground and sea units to kingdom come. Viewed from a behind-the-back 3D perspective, the 20 battlefields offered are not only interchangeable, they're also lively and gorgeous. Difficulty settings are equally impressive, with trucks, tanks, anti-aircraft artillery and screen-hogging bosses proving a considerable challenge.

Then again, acquiring new choppers (there are 10 in total)



Boss battles get messy, filling the screen with debris.

and downing adversaries only amuses for so long. What's more, it would be less of a chore if your shots could pass through structures, as can enemy forces'. Sound isn't anything to rave about either, although by and large, such warts can be forgiven in the face of the sweet, rapturous gameplay featured here.

Ultimately, think of it as a riotous, if short-lived diversion from the norm... and one with some pretty shit-hot superweapons to boot.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**68**

Good, solid fun with little long-term appeal



The best water effects ever seen in a game. Almost.



Again, really, really good water effects.



My crew. God bless 'em.

## VIRTUAL SKIPPER 2

■ £24.99 | Pub: Duran | Dev: Duran | ETA: Out Now

**OK, ONLINE** sailing.

Sure we're proud of Ellen MacArthur and that teenage kid and all that, but it's a sailing sim. Surely an accurate portrayal of the sport couldn't be much fun?

So explain to me why it's currently 4am and I'm thoroughly engrossed in an

online race against three Yanks, a Canadian, a Brazilian, a Frenchman and an Italian, and loving every minute of it?

True, I'm in last place and struggling to get any wind in my sails, but the thing is, I'm. Starting. To. Get. The. Hang. Of. It. Moments ago the concept of

'bearing off' suddenly clicked and I'm more in love with this thing than ever. And the single-player game is great too. This is why we play games! Online sailing is officially the new best thing ever. Kind of. (PP)

**PCZONE VERDICT** **79**

## RING II

■ £19.99 | Pub: Mindscape | Dev: Arxel Tribe |  
ETA: Out Now



Clearly, *Ring II* isn't the saviour of the point 'n' click adventure.

**DO YOU** pine the passing of the point 'n' click? Are you an aficionado of epic 'interactive adventures' such as *Myst*? Do you go to the opera? If so, this is your lucky day, as *Ring II* combines elements from all these genres, plus the odd bit of platforming, in a heady mix of styles that is simply, well, annoying.

Based on the Wagner opera *The Ring Of The Nibelungen* and using the art design of Philippe Druillet (like we're supposed to know who he is), *Ring II* follows the story of a boy enslaved by a dwarf, ensnared in a suit of iron,

freed by ravens and forced to concoct a 'philter of oblivion'. Make sense of that as you will.

Your job is to shuffle your character, Seigfreid, across the screen, while pressing return to interact with stuff, leaping over chasms and occasionally solving puzzles. It's staid, tiresome and possibly enjoyable for your mum.

Other than for opera-loving fans of Philippe Druillet and point 'n' click adventures, *Ring II* is only useful for seeing what weird German kids play in their bedrooms all day. (SOH)

**PCZONE VERDICT** **20**



# REPLAY

The place to go when you've got no dough

## GHOST RECON

■ £9.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | ETA: Out Now

WITH *GHOST Recon*, developer Redstorm swapped the cosy indoor environments that brought its *Rainbow Six* success with wide-open spaces. And the results are tremendous.



Enemies can be just specks in the dust.

The background is the usual Clancy dross of believable near-future political conflict, this time with the resurrection of that old US staple enemy, the communist Russians.

The action is fully first-person, and the graphics still hold their own, particularly the close-ups of your team-mates, who blink, crawl and run with complete realism. Their intelligence isn't quite up to their looks though, and you'll need to order them every step of the way, making sure to take full control of serious confrontations.

The fantastic interface helps you to do so without effort, although it takes a while before you can issue commands



RPG elements make things even more interesting, in an *X-COM*-lite kind of way.

mid-battle from the mini-map without wanting to pause it.

After the recent glut of fast, mindless action shooters, it's great to slip back into this slow-paced, thoughtful and strategic one. You might not get to run like a rabid hare, hopping over your enemies as you pummel them

with bullets and rockets, but the tension you get when every step has to be planned, and every rock, tree and wall could be concealing a sudden death, more than makes up for it.

Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

84



Who needs the Body Worlds exhibition when you've got this?

## SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

■ £4.99 | Pub: Xplosiv | ETA: Out Now

**SHOOTERS DON'T** get much more simplistic, linear, violent or xenophobic than this. And yet, somehow, you can't help enjoying it. A lot of it has to do with the obscene amount of gore and the childish pleasure you get from practicing dismemberment using a variety of weapons. And it's the first FPS to unlock the true potential of the sniper rifle: you see a body in the distance, you zoom in, you squeeze your mouse button, the head explodes like overripe fruit leaving a soggy cavern flapping inwards as the body crumbles to the ground. Yes, it's so sick you want to take a shower after it.

Unlike the sequel, the political nuances – if something this unsubtle can have nuances – are rather disquieting. Like the way you're penalised for killing US civilians but can happily mutilate Middle Eastern ones. For your fiver you at least get the special edition, which comes with five extra multiplayer maps, a strategy guide and new online modes. The lack of a free National Rifle Association member badge must have been an oversight.

Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

70

## HOMEWORLD: CATAclysm

■ £4.99 | Pub: Xplosiv | ETA: Out Now

**LEECHES.** Parasites. A technological entity that feeds on the power and energy of others in order to create its own warped version of the originals. In fact, the plot of *Homeworld: Cataclysm* can rightly be described as the most ironically apt game plot ever created, as it also serves as an exact description for developer Barking Dog Studios who took Relic's original sci-fi strategy masterpiece and tweaked, twisted and twatted with it until they got their own version of the game.

Not that *Cataclysm* is a bad game or anything. Far from it. Better in some ways to the original *Homeworld* (although really only in that 'more advanced polish' sort of

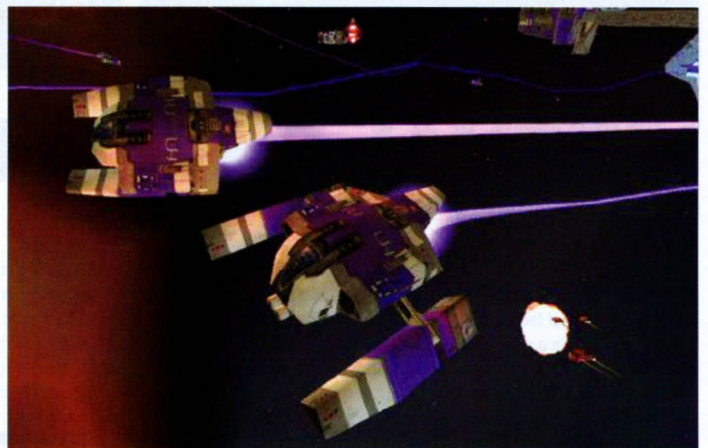
way), with a tighter plot, better controls and deeper strategy. Waypoint systems were added, ships could be linked together *Power Ranger* style and orders could finally be issued from the map screen – all things that Relic should really have incorporated from the start.

It'll never touch *Homeworld* for sheer impact of course. Relic were geniuses at this stage, Barking Dog just riding the coat-tails. But for the price you could do far worse. You could do better as well (*Homeworld* for instance), but that's neither here nor there.

Paul Presley

PCZONE VERDICT

80



*Homeworld: Cataclysm* – 3D space-based RTS at its best. Almost.





"Look behind you. No, honest mate, really. Look behind you."

## HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

■ £4.99 | Pub: Xplosiv | ETA: Out Now

**AND THERE** was me thinking games like this didn't exist any more. You know the type I mean. The ones you used to play in the arcades with the plastic light guns, populated by Hollywood rejects who would jump out of barrels and try to shoot you while your mate fed pound coins into the money slot at five second intervals. Yeeeee, you know the ones I'm talking about.

Sadly, I was wrong. They do still exist, and here's living (or dead) proof. Gameplay consists of pointing a light gun or mouse pointer at enemies that sporadically leap out at you during your monorail journey through the eponymous house, then pulling the trigger. A tricky

concept indeed, but given the right amount of time (no seconds), you'll start getting the idea. And for the first five minutes, you'll actually think you're having fun. Then you'll realise you're not. Then, that you're wasting your life. Then you'll go off and do something more appealing. Like cleaning out a random drain. With your tongue. Still, at least the most you can lose is five quid, which let's face it, is a damn site better than three months of hard-earned paper-round money. Not that I'm bitter you understand.

Martin Korda

PCZONE VERDICT **45**

## DISCIPLES: GOLD EDITION

■ £9.99 | Pub: Softkey | ETA: Out Now

**THIS GAME** could be described, if we were in any way overtly cynical, as the game that tried to take on the *Heroes Of Might & Magic* series and

failed, before its sequel later tried to take on more recent versions of the *HM&M* series, and also failed. But we are far too kind of heart to make such a comparison. So instead we will describe *Disciples: Gold Edition* as a game that safely emulates and pays homage to the earlier versions of the *HM&M* series, in as much as it's a fantasy-themed turn-based strategy game in which your objective is to conquer more map territory and resources than your computer opponent (or live opponent over the Internet).

It was reasonably playable a few years back, it's reasonably playable now, but when there are much better titles than this in the genre (including *Disciples II*) you have to wonder why anyone would consider buying this, even at a budget price. We would recommend picking up one of the earlier *HM&M* games at a knockdown price before this, unless you're completely mad, in which case go right ahead and buy it.

Chris Anderson

PCZONE VERDICT **40**



A poor man's *HM&M*.



Graphics are a bit poo.

## SEGA GT

■ £4.99 | Pub: Xplosiv | ETA: Out Now

**A PC VERSION** of a Dreamcast rip-off of a PlayStation classic, anyone? Yours for a fiver. Originally appearing two years ago on the doomed console, *Sega GT* was – and now is again – to all intents and purposes a bootleg of *Gran Turismo*. There's even a clue in the title. Admittedly, it's not a bad starting point, but it fails to pull off the whole licensed car/career based extravaganza with anything like the same panache.

Beginning the game with a piddling ten grand, it's a case of picking up a second-hand motor, eking out a few results and gradually upgrading your vehicle while acquiring licenses

through a series of driving tests.

Eventually, you'll have a garage full of gleaming cars, and will be able to pick and choose your races at will.

You may well have lost interest by this stage though, faced with some erratic handling and an absurd level of technical detail, including the option to build your own car. Throw in some truly tortured guitar music, and it's a test of anyone's patience. That said, there's plenty here for car bores, providing you can get over the initial tedium.

Steve Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

**64**



One day, you too may be able to own a car like this.

## LEFTOVERS

▲ It's a fine art. Gingerly parting the sheets, you edge your arse out from under the duvet. With sphincter clenched, you slowly start to relax – not too much – anally exhaling the noxious gas without a sound as your partner lies unsuspecting beside you. Sadly, *Silent Thunder* (Xplosiv, £4.99, out now), an uninspiring, withered old combat flight sim isn't nearly as much fun. 40 per cent.

*Edgar Torronteras Extreme Biker* (Xplosiv, £4.99, out now) is a would-be thriller of a stunt-filled motocross game. Two things on this one. Firstly, it's a bit shit. Secondly, who the f\*\*\* is Edgar Torronteras? Did someone make him up, or is he a real person? Come on, someone made him up, didn't they? No one's called Edgar anymore. Are they? 48 per cent.

Onwards and, fortunately, upwards. *Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars* (Xplosiv, £4.99, out now), was, or at least claims to have been, the first tactical sim which mixed turn-based strategy and real-time combat. Though it looks less appealing than a greased up dog, it is still vaguely fun to play, and deserves a solid score of 66 per cent. Well done.

Finally, *Jagged Alliance 2: Gold Pack* (Softkey, £9.99, out now), features the original game and the mini-sequel/cynical cash in, *Unfinished Business*, and is almost the mirror opposite of *Cyberstorm 2*, with its real-time exploration and turn-based combat. You're thrown into a campaign to overthrow a merciless dictator with your team of hired mercenaries. Highly entertaining, but at times impossibly hard, you'd do well to check this one out if you've got the patience and time to master it. 72 per cent.

Martin Korda



Extreme Biker



Cyberstorm 2



Jagged Alliance 2





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# HARDWARE

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE



■ **HARD WIRED** Steve Spence

▲ After finally getting the GeForce FX into our testbed rig this month, I thought I might be able to sneak a little gaming time on ATI and NVIDIA's latest kit to do a little 'real world' testing (in the name of journalism, of course) after putting them head-to-head in our new benchmark suite.

Forty-four hours of intensive testing later, and a shadow of my former self, I collapsed in a heap, muttering about framerates and scores, with flashbacks of helicopters, submarines and weird monsters dancing across my by now extremely blurred vision. Ouch.

Twenty-four hours of solid sleep later I began questioning the sanity of the idea, but looking at the results, it's been worth it – just one or two games can never tell the whole story, and even with three or four you can still easily miss key game engines or testing scenarios. But now with an arsenal of six benchmarks, I'm finally confident we can give you the fairest, most balanced appraisal of the performance of any new kit.

We're not going to rack up all six every time someone releases another re-badged version of the same board, but in technology pieces like this month's GeForce FX feature we think we're finally able to show you what you can expect in general from new hardware, rather than solely from the likes of the Quake or Unreal engines – after all we all occasionally stray from the FPS flock.

Anyhow, I'd better get back to it, I've kit to test. And an uber-rig to overclock for next month. See you then.

# HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP



**Forget about Intel and AMD, the big battle in the gaming world is between NVIDIA and ATI. Seconds out... round two!**

**ROUND ONE IN** the epic battle between ATI and NVIDIA is almost over, with both companies finally getting their current DX9 GPUs out on shelves this month. But before the smoke can clear or dust settle, it sounds like the first volleys of round two are on their way with more chips, more boards and some new options from both sides. As usual, we've got the full skinny way before anyone else...

## NVIDIA ANNOUNCES ENTRY-LEVEL DX9 CARDS

With NVIDIA recapturing the number one spot so convincingly with the GeForce FX, the company's turned its attention to the mid/entry level ranges with two new GPUs which should provide a DX9 solution for every budget. Good news for those who can't afford the initial top-end release.

First off is the GeForce FX 5600 Ultra, a mainstream DX9 part which until recently was codenamed NV31. Bearing all the same hallmarks of the GeForce FX 5800



One of the first round of DX9 games, *Breed* is looking superb.

Ultra (NV30), the GPU offers all the key GeForce FX DX9 functionality, including Intellisample Lossless Colour and Z-Compression, using the same advanced 0.13-micron process pioneered on NVIDIA's flagship GPU.

Where it does differ, however, is in its pipeline count, reduced from eight to four, and because of the lower memory speeds it

only requires DDR-I memories to get adequate memory bandwidth for the chip.

With a lower transistor count, thanks to the reduced number of pipelines, the GPU will be able to run quicker than you'd think as it will generate significantly less heat. As with all of the GPUs announced this month, clock speeds are as yet undisclosed, but as soon as we know them, you will.



Nice cleft: a stunning canyon environment from *Breed*.



Both NVIDIA and ATI are planning affordable DX9 solutions.

## NVIDIA VS ATI

Name	GeForce FX 5800 Ultra	GeForce FX 5800	GeForce FX 5600 Ultra	GeForce FX 5200 Ultra	GeForce FX 5200	Radeon 9800 Pro 256Mb
RAM	128-256Mb	128Mb	128Mb	128Mb	128Mb	256Mb
Memory Interface	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	256-bit
Memory Type	DDR-II	DDR-II	DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR-II
Floating Point Accuracy	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	96-bit
Manufacture Process	0.13 micron	0.13 micron	0.13 micron	0.15 micron	0.15 micron	0.15 micron
Pixel Pipelines	8	8	4	4	4	8
Multi-Monitor	nView	nView	nView	nView	nView	HydraVision
AGP	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x
Other Features	Intellisample	Intellisample	Intellisample			Hyper Z III





**REVIEWS**  
The first PC with GeForce FX



**REVIEWS**  
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# DRIVER WATCH

**DX9 might be out there, but manufacturers don't seem to have noticed**

**IT'S NOW TWO** months after DX9's release and there's still no sign of updates from many manufacturers, with the most significant updates offering bug-fixes at best.

Anyone with a PC that supports Hyperthreading and an Audigy2 sound card should nip across to Creative's UK site ([uk.europe.creative.com](http://uk.europe.creative.com)) as there's an updated driver which fixes a bunch of lockup-related issues on its new card as well as some sound-channel issues with EAX.

Possibly more surprising is the release of the Catalyst 3.1 Control Panels from ATI – two updates in two months is something of a record for the Canadian graphics vendor. Striving to overcome the bad reputation it has acquired over the last couple of generations

for poor drivers and slow reactions to bugs, the driver team are pushing out updates every four weeks or so, and up until now the updates

have been very much worthwhile.

Unfortunately we've had real problems with the 3.1s which caused lockups and

crashes on two of our test systems, so unless there's a specific issue you're looking to fix we'd hold off and stick with the 3.0s for the time being.

## MOTHERBOARDS

MANUFACTURER	NAME	VERSION	SIZE	WEB
Intel	ICH2 INF	3.20.1008	1.49Mb	<a href="http://support.intel.com">support.intel.com</a>
Intel	ICH4 INF	4.04.1007	1.31Mb	<a href="http://support.intel.com">support.intel.com</a>
SIS	IDE	2.0.2	5.45Mb	<a href="http://download.sis.com">download.sis.com</a>
SIS	AGP	1.1.3	5.29Mb	<a href="http://download.sis.com">download.sis.com</a>
VIA	Hyperion	4.45	1.29Mb	<a href="http://www.viaarena.com">www.viaarena.com</a>

## GRAPHICS

MANUFACTURER	NAME	VERSION	SIZE	WEB
ATI	Catalyst 3.1	6.14.01.6292	5.62Mb	<a href="http://www.ati.com">www.ati.com</a>
ATI	Catalyst 3.1 Control Panel	6.14.10.4019	4.62Mb	<a href="http://www.ati.com">www.ati.com</a>
Matrox	Parhelia	1.03.00.043	8.22Mb	<a href="http://www.matrox.com">www.matrox.com</a>
NVIDIA	Detonator 40	41.09	16.3Mb	<a href="http://www.nvidia.com">www.nvidia.com</a>

## SOUND

MANUFACTURER	NAME	VERSION	SIZE	WEB
Creative	Audigy	11.2	12.67Mb	<a href="http://uk.europe.creative.com">uk.europe.creative.com</a>
Creative	Audigy2	11.03.02.05	5.86 Mb	<a href="http://uk.europe.creative.com">uk.europe.creative.com</a>
Hercules	Fortissimo/Digifire/Game Theater	6.07	14.7Mb	<a href="http://europe.hercules.com">europe.hercules.com</a>

## CHEAP AS CHIPS

The second and third shots to be fired from the NVIDIA trenches come in the form of the GeForce FX 5200 and GeForce FX 5200 Ultra. Originally codenamed NV34, both boards are based on two variations of a single die, which, while sharing a lot of the top-end FX features has been made on a simpler 0.15 micron design to further minimise cost (and maybe even bring boards in under £100).

As with the 5600 Ultra, GeForce FX 5200 uses DDR-I memories and all the DX9 features you'll need to get the best from games like *Doom III*. The one other cost-cutting measure NVIDIA has made with this entry level DX9 chip is the removal of Intellisample. While it will still feature high quality antialiasing and anisotropic filtering, the complex compression used on the top chips has been removed, reducing its thermal profile and, more importantly, the price.



Put all these solutions together and you've got a range of cards that should hit every price point, from the absolute bleeding edge (£400 plus) right down to the entry-level gamer (under £100 with any luck). Expect both standalone and system reviews of the boards as soon as they become available.

## ATI READY WITH NEW CHIPS AS WELL

Desperate to maintain the market lead the Radeon 9700 Pro has given it over the past few months, ATI is ready to take NVIDIA head-on with another batch of DX9 boards based on two brand-new chips.

Aiming for the number one spot before the GeForce FX 5800 has had a chance to settle in is the Radeon 9800 (codename R350). As with

the 9700, there will be two 128Mb DDR-I versions – pro and standard, but not content with this ATI are also offering a 256Mb board using DDR-II (chosen for design reasons rather than bandwidth). With higher frequencies than the 9700, the 9800 GPUs are almost identical aside from a new buffer to help the chips execute longer shaders. 128Mb versions are expected in April with the 256Mb expected a month later, sometime in May.

The other announcement, that of the ATI 9600 (aka RV350), sees ATI move to a 0.13 micron. Like the 9500, the chip has only four pipelines but because of the smaller die size, the chip can run quicker (and hopefully cooler) than current 9500-based boards. Cards should be shipping in May, albeit in limited numbers at first. As is our way, we'll be testing these as soon as we get cards – look out for a big round-up soon.

**“ATI is ready to take NVIDIA head-on with another batch of DX9 boards”**

Radeon 9800 Pro 128Mb	Radeon 9800 Pro	Radeon 9700 Pro	Radeon 9700	Radeon 9600 Pro	Radeon 9600	Radeon 9500 Pro	Radeon 9500
128Mb	128Mb	128Mb	128Mb	128Mb	64Mb	128Mb	64Mb
256-bit	256-bit	256-bit	256-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit	128-bit
DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR	DDR
96-bit	96-bit	96-bit	96-bit	96-bit	96-bit	96-bit	96-bit
0.15 micron	0.15 micron	0.15 micron	0.15 micron	0.13 micron	0.13 micron	0.15 micron	0.15 micron
8	8	8	8	4	4	4	4
HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision	HydraVision
8x	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x
Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III	Hyper Z III

## SNIPPETS

### DEATH OF THE FLOPPY

We've seen it coming for a long time now, and finally the first steps are being made to phase out the rather antiquated floppy drive. After an announcement this month, Dell are preparing to offer customers systems without the floppy, and are talking about standardising the move across their entire range by the end of this year.

With some PC's still not including CDRW as standard, and because of the relative cost of the media, the manufacturer will instead offer USB memory keys, which can provide 50 times the storage at the same cost.

### MICROSOFT PROPOSE A CHARGE FOR EMAIL?

With the daily increase in email traffic, a large proportion of which is attributed to spam and viruses, Microsoft is apparently investigating the idea of charging a nominal fee, which would amount to a piddling amount to me or you but could prove prohibitive to spammers. Other ideas include taking over CPU cycles on the sender's system (to slow down bulk spammers) and performing Turing Tests which would identify them as intelligent life rather than a spam relay. We don't care how they do it, but if it rids our inboxes of daily offers of Viagra and penis extensions it gets our support.

### THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE DOWNRIGHT UGLY



Each time a new graphics card comes out, someone releases a benchmark, and with the arrival of DX9 FutureMark has released 3DMark'03. Based on a number of synthetic tests, 3DMark'03 attempts to show how your PC sizes up in 'typical' DX9 scenarios, but in our humble opinion it doesn't reflect the real-world that affects you, so we're going to stick to testing games.

### THE DEATH OF DVD?

After only a couple of years after its real arrival in the UK, manufacturers have started working on the successor to DVD. Called Blu-Ray Disc, the technology uses light with a shorter wavelength (a blue laser) to read a higher density of data on discs the same size as the existing format. With 27Gb of space on a single-sided 12cm disc, the potential is enormous, with additional space for higher quality soundtracks, aspect ratios and features.



# GEFORCE FX

**FIRST LOOK**

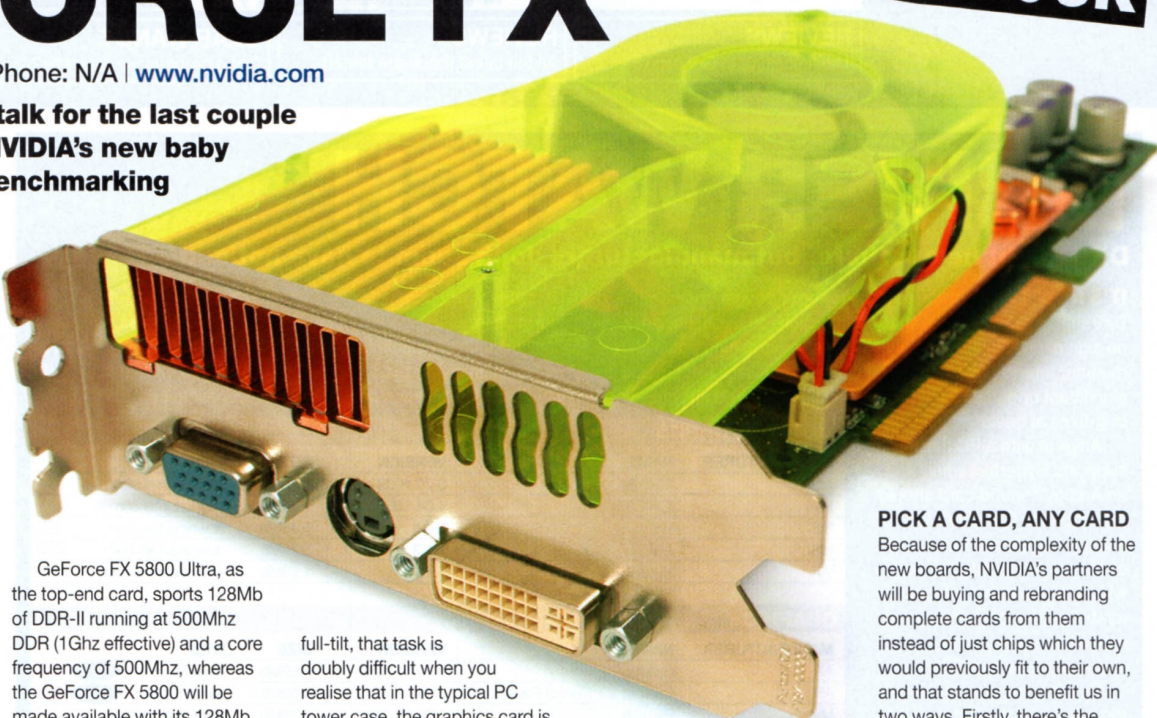
■ Price: TBC | NVIDIA | Phone: N/A | [www.nvidia.com](http://www.nvidia.com)

**It's been talking the talk for the last couple of months, but can NVIDIA's new baby stand up to Zone's benchmarking king Steve Spence?**

**THE LAST** 12 months have been an interesting time for 3D cards. With the advent of DirectX 9, ATI and Matrox have released new cards that they hope will signal the end to NVIDIA's dominance of the market with its GeForce 4 range. For the past few months, ATI's 9700 Pro has been wiping the floor with the competition, but NVIDIA had an ace up its sleeve. The GeForce FX has been threatening to drop in our hands since Christmas, but now it's here, and we've torture-tested it all the way to silicon hell and back to see whether it's going to sail past the others and straight back into the top slot.

## TWO CARDS, A SINGLE GPU

Up until now, we've talked about the GeForce FX as a single GPU or chip, but in real-world terms NVIDIA has two new boards to offer – the GeForce FX 5800 and the GeForce FX 5800 Ultra. Both offer the full feature set of 'beyond DX9' shaders across eight pipelines, DDR-II support and true 128-bit floating-point calculations; in fact the only difference is clock speeds.



GeForce FX 5800 Ultra, as the top-end card, sports 128Mb of DDR-II running at 500Mhz DDR (1Ghz effective) and a core frequency of 500Mhz, whereas the GeForce FX 5800 will be made available with its 128Mb memory running at a reduced 400Mhz DDR (800Mhz effective) and 400Mhz GPU core.

With a core frequency up to 200Mhz quicker than its previous top chip, Ti4600, NVIDIA has had to come up with a pretty advanced cooling solution, FX Flow – a sophisticated cooler, coupled with a method by which the board dynamically scales its clock speeds and cooling, dependent on the type of work it's doing. With a chip running at half a gigahertz when it's going

full-tilt, that task is doubly difficult when you realise that in the typical PC tower case, the graphics card is upside down, with the GPU facing downwards and heat helpfully trying to move in the opposite direction.

Another part of the GPU's thermal management includes temperature monitoring, which can clock the card back down if it were to overheat from an over-adventurous

**The FX Ogre demo is seriously impressive.**

overclock.

So rather than lock up when things get too much, the GPU winds its clock speeds back and lets itself cool off, saving your silicon and allowing you to drop out of your gaming gracefully to return to windows without the otherwise inevitable crash.

## PICK A CARD, ANY CARD

Because of the complexity of the new boards, NVIDIA's partners will be buying and rebranding complete cards from them instead of just chips which they would previously fit to their own, and that stands to benefit us in two ways. Firstly, there's the simple matter of quality – you can be sure that whoever you buy a GeForce FX from, it's as good as any other card, physically at least. Then there's performance – with the GeForce 4 cards there were plenty of problems when small and unscrupulous manufacturers

## FILM 2003

**YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO BUY THEM YET BUT CINEMATIC-QUALITY GAMES ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. HERE'S THE PROOF.**

Based on a scene from *Yeah! The Movie* by Spellcraft Studios (download from [www.spellcraft.de](http://www.spellcraft.de) if you're interested), the Ogre demo was put together to demonstrate just how close the GeForce FX can bring gamers to cinematic-quality visuals in real-time.

What we see, is 'The Boss' Ogre dancing with some of his little minion creatures, and one by one eating them alive. A tad gruesome, but then no-one said cinematics had to be pretty!



## BRING THE NOISE



Can you hear him talk above the noise the card makes?

**WE KNOW THE CARD'S FAST BUT JUST HOW NOISY IS IT GOING TO BE?**

The faster the graphics card, the bigger the cooling system needed to keep it from melting down. The potential problem here is that early GeForce FX reference cards were extremely noisy, although the latest card we got from NVIDIA was admittedly a hell of a lot better, and we've heard that Gainward is claiming a cooling system that makes their card about as quiet as a human heart beat. As for everyone else, the jury's still out – retail cards are going to come with their own cooling solutions and we'll be reviewing the first one next issue.

Can she do: "That FX card costs how much?!"



tried to cut corners by using slow memory clocked out of spec, or even worse underclocking boards. This time around that can't happen.

Another aspect of a single board design is that of price. Initially, at least, pricing should be similar regardless of manufacturer, and initial indications are that the top-end FX 5800 Ultra board will cost between £400 and £450, while the FX 5800 will cost between £50 and £80 less.

That doesn't mean that every board will be a carbon copy of the next. Some manufacturers are finalising unique features such as alternate cooling solutions to differentiate their product and allow their boards to run quicker, cooler or perhaps both as in the case of Gainward – which is totting a unique cooler which, when running full-whack is only about 7db – equivalent to the noise of a human heartbeat.

With identical performance at the same frequencies we can also put the reference card we've been given through the mill, and show you just how a retail FX card stacks up against the competition. So, without further ado...

## BENCHMARKS

Looking at the 2xAA gaming benchmarks, it's pretty clear that GeForce FX is a huge step ahead of the Ti4600, and while the margins aren't as good as you might expect, the new GPU squeezes past the Radeon managing a lead of up to 30% at higher resolutions.

With all three GPUs maxed out with 8x Anisotropic Filtering added to the tests, those margins increase substantially with the FX dishing out up to three times the frame rate of the Ti4600, and double what ATI's current numero uno can deliver.

More important than its lead over the competitors, however, is the relatively tiny impact anisotropic filtering has on the new card's scores – with only a 10% hit with 8x enabled there's no reason gamers can't expect to run the FX with a decent degree of AA and AF on any of today's games – or for that matter any of those that are released over the next 6–12 months – and still get the benefit of consistently high frame rates.

## CONCLUSION

GeForce FX is here and even with early drivers it's made a huge impact. Forget the early 'reviews' you might have seen on the Internet, these are the first tests done with NVIDIA-

approved drivers and the card is definitely the fastest out there.

From the naming convention we get the feeling these two boards are only the tip of the iceberg. So if the wrong side of £300 for a graphics card sounds like stupid money, hold fire and with any luck we should be able

to bring you news of cheaper options in the coming months (Stop Press! Check our hardware news pages for the latest breaking news).

If you're feeling flush, retail cards should be becoming available from NVIDIA's partners by the time this issue hits the

shelves, so if you are looking for a shiny new DX9 card and have the cash, we'd opt for the FX. Bundles and branding are generally a matter of personal tastes, but we'll try to make sure we review the biggest and best over the coming months to show you what your options are. [CP]

**"The FX card is definitely the fastest money can currently buy"**

## BENCHMARKS

### HOT-ROD ROAD TEST

To try and show you what these chips are really about, we've tested a reference GeForce FX 5800 Ultra against last year's king of the hill, Radeon 9700 Pro, as well as the GPU it dethroned, the GeForce 4 Ti4600.

As the fourth generation of NVIDIA GPU to offer anti-aliasing, all of our tests used 2xAA as the bare minimum, and in some cases we've gone one step further with 8x Anisotropic Filtering, to really push the GPUs to their limits.

You might think it's a bit crazy to benchmark on such a high-spec system but there's a very good reason why we've done it. Had we opted for something slower, say at or below 2Ghz, it would have been like fitting a Ferrari engine in a mini – many of the scores produced would have been CPU-limited, and in all but the highest resolutions we would effectively have been benchmarking processors rather than showing you what these boards can really do in ideal conditions.

### TEST SYSTEM

Intel Pentium 4 3066Mhz – Hyperthreading Disabled  
ASUS P4G8X Deluxe – AGP 8X, Granite Bay Motherboard  
1024Mb Corsair PC3200 CAS2 Memory – 2x512Mb DIMMs in Dual-channel operation  
120Gb Seagate Barracuda ATA V 7200RPM hard drive  
No sound

### WINDOWS XP PRO

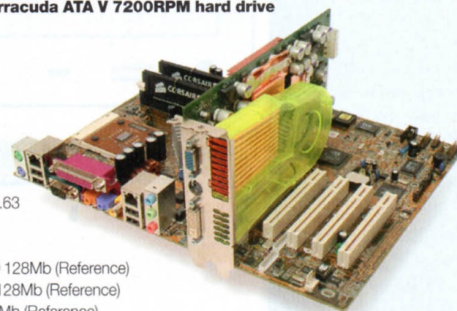
Service Pack 1  
DirectX 9

### DRIVERS:

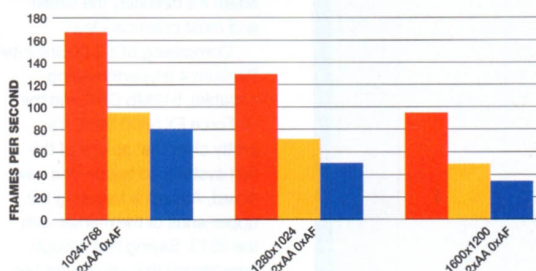
ATI: Catalyst 3.0  
NVIDIA: Detonator v42.63

### CARDS:

GeForce FX Ultra 5800 128Mb (Reference)  
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128Mb (Reference)  
GeForce 4 Ti4600 128Mb (Reference)

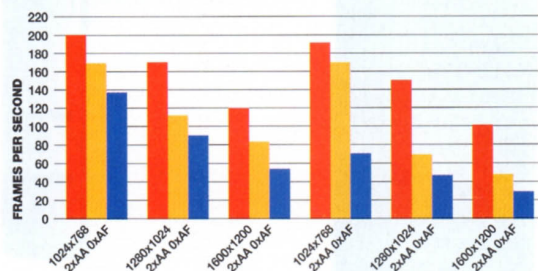


### SERIOUS SAM: ELEPHANT'S ATRIUM

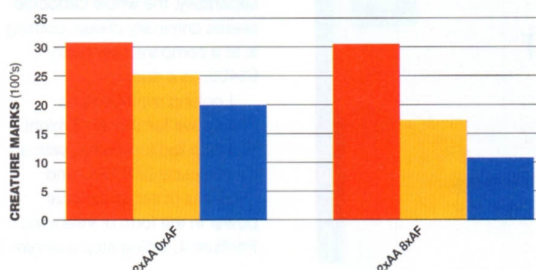


AA and AF set from driver. 32Bpp, Shaders enabled, Quality Setting, Extreme Detail Addon, Elephant's Atrium Demo, AA 2X, AF Determined by add-on (L4)

### UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003: FLYBY

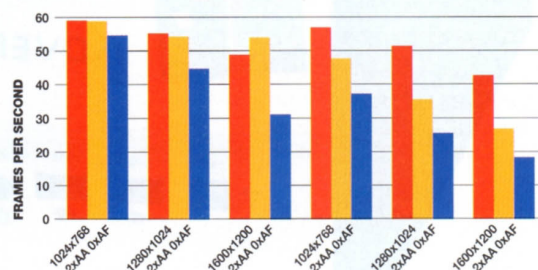


### CODECREATURES PRO 2002



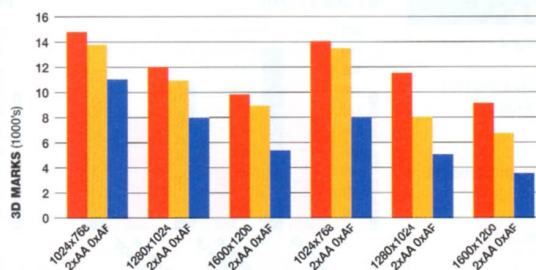
Default full benchmark.

### COMANCHE 4



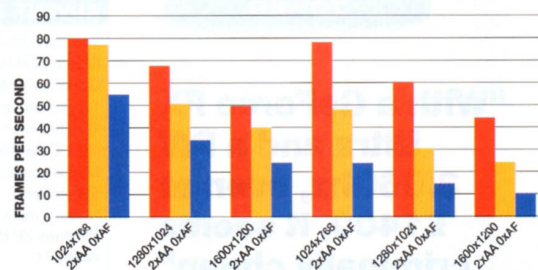
Default settings, 32Bpp, audio disabled

### 3DMARK 2001SE BUILD 330



Default settings, Game 1-4 only.

### AQUANOX 2.3



AA and AF set from driver, 40Mb textures, 32Bpp

KEY: GeForce FX 5800 Ultra (Red), Radeon 9700 Pro (Yellow), GeForce 4 Ti4600 8X (Blue)



# ADVENT 3513

■ Price: £1400 | Manufacturer: Advent | Phone: web purchase only | [www.pcworld.co.uk](http://www.pcworld.co.uk)



**It's the first system we've seen with a GeForce FX under the bonnet, so forgive us for being unnaturally excited about the whole thing...**

**YOU LIKE** the look of the GeForce FX from the previous two pages and you want one – and want one now – trouble is the chances are your PC isn't quite up to the job, which leaves only one course of action: upgrade. If you're happy getting your hands dirty, ripping out motherboards, processors, power supplies and all the other components required for the inevitable transformation, then we'd like to promptly doff our hats in your direction. But most of you would probably rather save your pennies and plump for a complete box upgrade – unless you're technologically adept it's definitely the safest and most practical idea.

Comprising of a 3.06Ghz Intel Pentium 4 (Hyperthreading capable), 512Mb DDR and the GeForce FX 5800 Ultra, it's pretty clear that as one of the first systems to feature the new board, Advent is targeting the upper-ends of the market with the 3513. Saying that though, considering that you've got two of the most sought-after gaming components in the box, worth almost £1000 when bought separately, the whole caboodle seems criminally cheap, coming in at a comparatively paltry £1400, as it does.

Looking over the spec initially, we felt the 3513 might end up a tad top-heavy, with a powerhouse DX9 GPU and 3066Mhz of computational power in the form of Intel's top Pentium 4, sitting atop a single-

channel DDR motherboard (the i845GE based GA-8GEMT4 from Gigabyte). It looked like both components would end up being bottlenecked by low memory bandwidth. After all, when you buy a new box, the hope is that the core components will outlive feature parts rather than the other way around.

Thankfully, the benchmarks indicate quite the opposite. In gaming terms, the 3513 whips the likes of the comparatively priced Vision Gamer LX and Xtreme XP 2400+RD97 (reviewed in issue #124), only losing out to the dual-channel DDR goodness of the nForce2 seen in the Multivision machine. For sheer frame rate throughput the GeForce FX 5800 does a great job, with the 3Ghz CPU alleviating the generally CPU-limited scores seen at 1024x768, and doubling the 1600x1200 scores of many systems available at the same price point.

With integrated networking, on-board sound, USB2.0 and Firewire, the overall spec is pretty well rounded. And if you're after a new rig to futureproof your frame rates and gaming capabilities for the next 18 months or so (before the next inevitable quantum leap in computing) then we reckon as an early entry the 3513 is an excellent choice.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **91**  
Next-gen now

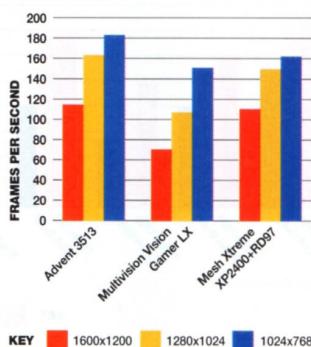
## TOWER

**"With a GeForce FX Ultra and a PIV 3.06Ghz, even at £1400, it seems criminally cheap"**

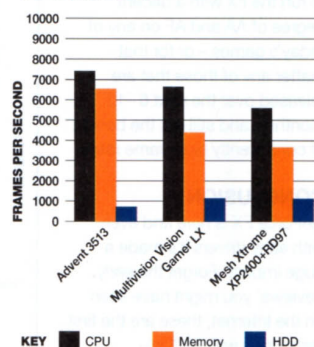
### ADVENT 3513

Intel Pentium 4 3.06ghz  
512mb DDR RAM  
GeForce FX 5800 Ultra graphics  
120gb Hard drive (5400x)  
16x DVD Rom  
48x CD Rewriter  
USB keyboard and Optical mouse  
56k modem  
Network ready  
Windows XP Home  
Works 7.0  
Nero  
Power DVD  
You can upgrade to a 15" TFT (the Advent 1550) for an additional £199

### UT 2003 FLYBY



### PC MARK 2002





# JUKEBOX ZEN

■ Price: £329.99 | Manufacturer: Creative Labs | [uk.europe.creative.com](http://uk.europe.creative.com)

## Zen and the art of listening to music while on the move

**IN THE** quest for the perfect personal audio solution, the humble MP3 player has undergone several significant transitions to get us where we are today. Radical designs and peculiar, uncomfortable shapes have been done away with, and with the exception of the discman-esque Creative Jukebox, most of the top units now resemble a svelte cassette walkman, replete with digital displays and long-life batteries.

Jukebox 3 into a significantly smaller housing.

Build quality is significantly improved over the traditional Jukebox design as well – the new unit feels much sturdier and more polished. Playback controls are also better, distributed across both of the player's sides, and top-right is the navigation wheel, operating in much the same way as the Jukebox 3. Connectivity remains at USB1.1 for the legacy users

of juice, and we expected much shorter playing times than the JB3. Creative quotes 12 hours from the lithium-ion cell, and our tests exceeded that by more than an hour. So if you're after tunes for the daily commute, you probably won't need to charge it more than once a week.

So rather than being a poor man's iPod, the Zen is a sweet little player. We'd take its size and features over the Jukebox 3 any day. With support for legacy

## "Creative has managed to cram features from the Jukebox 3 into a much smaller housing"

The iPod, from Apple, is currently seen as the most desirable player money can buy, and in direct response to its success, Creative has produced the Jukebox Zen. Much smaller than the Jukebox 3 and only marginally bigger than the iPod, the good news is that Creative has managed to cram all the main features from the old

out there, with Firewire for the remainder – if the idea of 12 hours to fill the Zen to its 20Gb capacity seems slightly off-putting, then we'd encourage investment in a PCI Firewire card, which start at around £20.

Driving what is effectively a small computer complete with hard-drive for anything up to or over 10 hours requires quite a lot

users and a lower price tag, Creative's latest baby gets one over the Apple player, with only the usual sub-standard phones and bloated bespoke software letting it down.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **85**  
Almost rivals the iPod



MP3 PLAYER

# DVDRW228

DVD BURNER

■ Price: £225.99 | Manufacturer: Philips | Phone: 0870 601 0101 | [www.philips.co.uk](http://www.philips.co.uk)

## A DVD-writer that doesn't cost the earth? Yeah baby...

**OVER THE** next 12 months we predict that the floppy drive is going to die a horrible death – and about time too. As a means of removable storage the floppy is notoriously flaky (how many times have you tried to move something important just to hear a grinding noise that wouldn't be out of place on a building site?) and, in the modern day, pretty much completely useless, offering just 1.5Mb of space.

Yesterday's answer would have been to invest in a CD-writer, but with the arrival of OSs such as Windows XP, which comes with an installed footprint of around 2Gb, and stacks of data bloating ever upwards, backing-up can be a real pain, running across several CDs.

The DVDRW228 from Philips is a second generation DVD+RW drive which offers the DVD+R capability that first-generation drives lacked, making it a viable candidate to help you reclaim

your hard drive or backup your data without the need for costly +RW media. The unit itself is also a lot cheaper than first generation units, costing less than half of what an early RAM or +RW drive would have at around £230. Using an IDE interface, installation is simple and under modern OSs such as XP, support is native.

Offering up to 4.7Gb per disc, (single-sided, single-layered), a 4Gb write took us around 22 minutes, which is on par with

the manufacturer's claims of a 2.4x burn. Because the processes to write +R and +RW are identical, that kind of time is fair, regardless of media. The drive is also CDRW capable and can write/rewrite at 12x and 10x respectively.

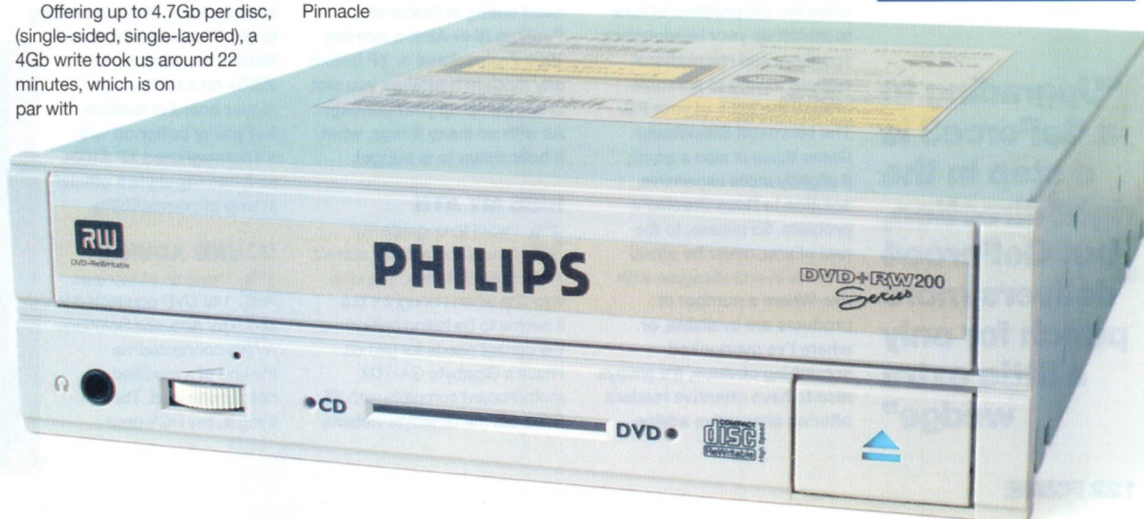
As well as the drive you get a number of multimedia applications such as Pinnacle

Studio 7 (a video editor), MyDVD 3.5 (a DVD-Authoring utility), Nero Burning ROM 5.5, and a copy of PowerDVD.

A lot of you might not be able to justify spending more than £200 on removable storage – especially if you've got your gaming eye on a new graphics card – but with bloating collections of MP3s and other

multimedia, a DVD+RW drive and a stack of discs will cost you less in the long-run. Either way, the DVDRW228 is a competent performer – it's not cheap but it does the job brilliantly.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **84**  
Useful piece of kit







# DEAR WANDY

It's time for Wendy to wave his magic rod again. With a stroke of his hand, he pumps forth the seeds of knowledge and, um... let's just get to the letters

■ TECHNOPHILE Phil Wand

## LET IT ALL OUT

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in-type thing.

**Write to** Dear Wendy, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

**Email** Address your letters to us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Dear Wendy'. Please note: while we can assure you that we read absolutely every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Sorry.



The Trust Multi Media Hub allows you to mix inputs and outputs from speakers, headphones and microphone. And yes, so does Microsoft's Game Voice.

## TRUST ME

**Q** A few months back in PCZ #124, Ross Brooker asked for a way of switching from speakers to headphones and microphone. Well, have a look at the Trust Multi-Media Hub at [www.trust.com/products/product.htm?artnr=12304](http://www.trust.com/products/product.htm?artnr=12304). I have one myself and it's nothing short of fantastic. Plug your speakers, microphone and cans into the box, and then at the click of a button switch between them. Every gamer should own one.

Chip

**Q** I'm disappointed in Wendy's oversight in replying to Ross Brooker's letter from PCZ #124. He failed to point out that the easiest and probably the cheapest option for Ross would be to purchase a Microsoft SideWinder Game Voice. Not only is it designed as a set of headphones with a microphone for exactly the purpose Ross describes, but also the command box that accompanies it has a switch to change between speakers and headphones. Problem solved for about £20 notes.

Anon, Microsoft

**A** Having had a look at the Trust box, and having had a good sniff around various retailers online, it seems that for less than a tenner you can solve the old problem of how to match up your headphones, speakers and microphone without having to scabble around the back of your PC. The Microsoft SideWinder Game Voice is also a good, if slightly more expensive, solution to Ross Brooker's problem. So please, to the rest of you, never be afraid to write in and disagree with me. Where a number of products are available, or where I've overlooked something obvious, it's always nice to have attentive readers offering alternative advice.

## THREE OR FOUR

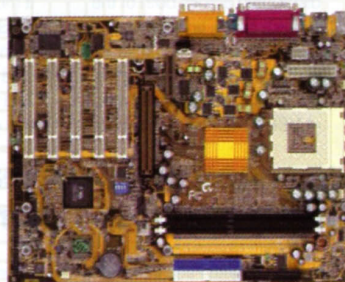
**Q** I'm thinking of upgrading my old Hercules 64Mb 4500TV-Out graphics card as I'm sick of only getting around 18FPS on games such as MOH:AA and Spearhead. I was wondering, would I see the benefits if I went for a GeForce3 Ti200 or should I spend an extra £40 and go for the 64Mb DDR PNY GF4 Ti200? Will either of these two cards make my computer a better games machine? The spec on my PC is a Compaq 750 Duron with 384Mb SDRAM.

Jimmy

**A** This is an extremely common question and one that doesn't get easier to answer no matter how many times it crops up. In short, upgrading to a GeForce 3 is a step in the right direction and your favourite games will become just that little bit more bearable, but a GeForce4 will deliver a more noticeable punch for only a little extra wedge. What'll hold you back from the triple digit frame rates and hydraulically smooth action you desire is the PC and the operating system underneath. Buying a GeForce4 Ti for your Duron will be like strapping a Garrett turbo to a Daewoo – no offence, but that old PC will need outting in favour of a Pentium IV or Athlon running 2000 Professional or XP before any modern hardware you slot in will pump up your gaming. As with so many things, what it boils down to is budget.

## KISS MY ATH

**Q** I want to upgrade my processor from my current 1.2GHz AMD Athlon. The chip was fine when I bought it but it seems to be falling behind the current needs for games. I have a Gigabyte GA-7DX motherboard complete with F7 BIOS but the Gigabyte website



**You'll need to check the revision number of GA-7DX boards before you can determine how fast it'll go.**

is proving unhelpful on just what the board will support. One page says it will support the XP 2200+, another that you can't go higher than a XP 2100+. What's the bottom line here? Not only do I want a processor that'll work, but I also want to get the highest possible clock speed to keep me up with modern games. What do you reckon?

John Wilkinson

**A** It depends what revision your motherboard is. Gigabyte's DX comes in three different flavours, each with different processor ceilings: the revision 1 and 2 boards require you to jumper a connection on the motherboard before you can use an XP 2100+, but the revision 3 and 4 boards support them without modification. Look on the board itself to discover which one you have. Now, according to the F7 release BIOS you flashed in, using an XP 2200+ on a revision 3 or higher board is feasible but you're better off with a Thoroughbred XP 2100+ as it has Gigabyte's official stamp of compatibility.

## SOUND ADVICE

**Q** I have an eMachines 140 DVD connected to two 50W Acoustic Solutions AV20s connected via the end of a modified headphone lead. The thing is, my PC's poor

performance is letting down the speakers as it only has an average onboard sound card. As I intend to expand my speakers for surround purposes I'll need to upgrade my soundcard – what's the best card I can get my hands on with a budget of £150?

Mike Britton

**A** I confess I've never heard of an eMachines 140 so have no clue as to what lurks under the bonnet. The AV20s you have are good, all-round boxes and will be great as part of a surround setup. Sure, they're not a pair of spanking Ruarks or T+A Elektroakustiks, but then I wouldn't dream of hooking £1,800 loudspeakers to my PC. There are far too many squeaks, honks, crumps, thumps and random howls for my liking – experience has shown that mucking about in Half-Life is the best way to blow out your tweeters. Using leads you've made yourself is another way, so I'd drop the modified wires in favour of proper cables bought from Tandy or another high-street retailer. The best card you can get to replace the eMachines default is our current Best Buy, the Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy – it retails around £160, but you should be able to pick one up either

in a special or on eBay and not bust your budget. The Audigy offers Dolby 5.1 surround sound plus EAX Advanced – Creative's own take on the immersion sound experience, and one that was designed with gamers in mind. See [eax.creative.com](http://eax.creative.com) for

The T+A Elektroakustik A2D, the most amazing loudspeaker I've ever heard. Keep well away from your PC.



**"Upgrading to a GeForce3 is a step in the right direction, but GeForce4 delivers more punch for only a little extra wedge"**



## "Personally speaking, I'm more interested in dog poo than overclocking"

more details. Remember that if the existing sound card is incorporated into the motherboard you'll have to disable it in the BIOS or, failing that, hit it repeatedly with a toffee mallet. Er, just kidding. Don't do that.

### VIA DUCT TAPE

**Q** I bought a GeForce4 Ti4400 graphics card back in May and found the thing to be incredibly unstable. Using any drivers other than v29.42 resulted in most games freezing, crashing back to the desktop, or throwing a blue screen of death. I'd tried everything. Windows Service Packs, updated NVIDIA Drivers, BIOS upgrades, but nothing made any difference. After much research online, it appears to be a VIA problem which affects mainly GeForce4 and Windows XP systems, but can seemingly affect any GeForce and Windows combination. I downloaded a VIA driver from [downloads.viaarena.com/drivers/others/Test\\_driver1.zip](http://downloads.viaarena.com/drivers/others/Test_driver1.zip), installed it, and now my system is working perfectly. I've upgraded the NVIDIA drivers and can now play every game I own without fear of it crashing. I don't claim to understand how the VIA driver has worked, but it's worked for me and others, and I want to spread the word through your magazine so other people can hopefully fix their systems and enjoy gaming again.

Anon

**A** Anyone who's installed a GeForce card on a PC with a VIA chipset will be aware of the issues surrounding the way the two interact – especially using Windows XP. The VIA problem is a longstanding one and I'm very happy to pass on the knowledge you've gained. Anyone experiencing similar grief should read the VIA Support Forums and also [www.viaarena.com/?PageID=64](http://www.viaarena.com/?PageID=64).

### TIMMEH!

**Q** Seems like I've really broken my PC this time. Basically, I overclocked the CPU vcore from 1.75 to 1.9, and now whenever I turn the PC on the display stays black. It's not the screen and there are no alarming burning smells. The machine is a P4 1.7GHz, 512Mb DDR RAM, Dual BIOS P4 Titan GA-8IDX mobo and GeForce4 running Windows XP Home. Any ideas or suggestions on what I can do? I can't get back into the BIOS because the screen is just black. Should I just save up for a new processor and motherboard?

Tim

**A** This was originally posted at [www.dearwandy.com](http://www.dearwandy.com), but I've included my response here as it's helped a few people out of what they thought was terminal trouble. These days, overclocking, overheating, clock speeds and benchmark results get rammed down the throats of anyone buying high-performance hardware, and the pickle you've gotten yourself into is a rather common one. By choosing the wrong settings, there's a high chance you'll screw your PC to the extent that the POST – Power On Self Test – will fail and you won't even get to see the prompt to enter the BIOS and put things back to how they were. But don't panic. Is the PC making beeping noises immediately after you power up? The BIOS may be trying to tell you it's failing its test, so check your motherboard manual or the website of the manufacturer for details of what the beeps actually mean. Depending on your BIOS, there may be a keystroke combination to reset the settings to their factory defaults – try holding down the INS key as you power on. Failing that, you can go back to defaults the hard way: there should either be a jumper on



If you're overcooked from overclocking, don't take a hammer to your PC just yet. Wandy may have the answer.

the motherboard, or you can remove the CMOS battery for five or ten minutes, drop it back in, and away you go. Personally speaking, I'm more interested in dog poo than overclocking. Get yourself a good, stable system that's fast enough for the games you want to play. Get it up to date with the proper drivers, visit [windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com) to get the recent patches, then leave it alone!

### RETURN OF THE MONGS

**Q** A couple of issues back you mentioned a program called *SpaceMonger*, which I duly installed. A question thereby arises. How can I get rid of the huge wad of backup and archive files in the \_RESTORE folder? I have more than 600Mb jammed up on my main machine and the folder accounts for over a quarter of the minuscule hard drive. By the way, cracking little program, isn't it?

Tim Bromiege

**A** My highlighting of *SpaceMonger* prompted three very similar questions from other concerned users alarmed by the cancerous growth that is the Windows \_RESTORE folder. I provided an answer in PCZ #125, but for those of you who missed it, here it is again. First, make sure your copy of Windows is fully patched up. Second, visit the System Settings control panel and either disable system restore or reduce the amount of space it gobbles. Third, if that doesn't work, boot to DOS and delete the folder manually. Just don't come crying to me when you discovered you needed something from inside it! [X]

## READERS' TOP TIP

### SHORT AND OH SO SWEET

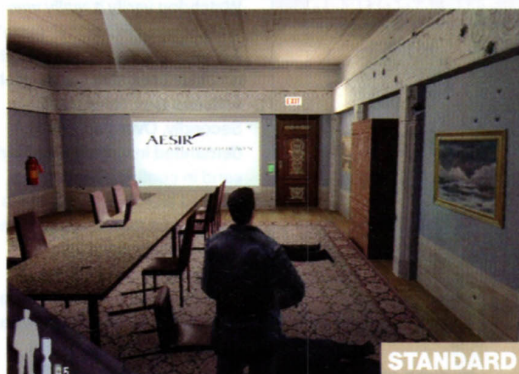
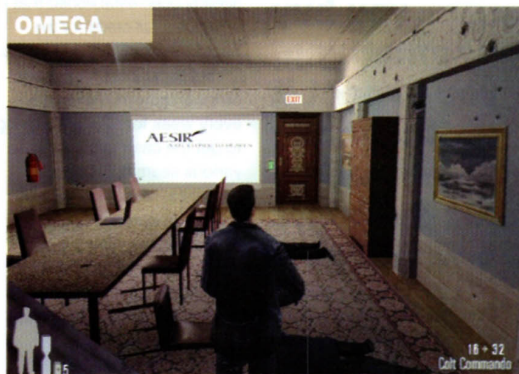
Just a little tip for anyone who's feeling a bit cheated by some of the texture quality on GeForce4 cards. You can get much better graphics using the third party, unsupported OMEGA drivers from [www.omegacorner.com](http://www.omegacorner.com) with only a fraction of the frame-rate hit

Andrew Brown



Wandy says: A good tip for people who remain unsatisfied with the visual quality of their Detonator-driven NVIDIA card, or who are experiencing graphical problems. Just before Christmas, someone dropped me a line and suggested I tried the OMEGA set on my setup. At the time I was happy with the performance and visuals of my old Detonator set, but since the New Year I've seen an increasing number of people extolling the virtues of OMEGA – so I decided to give them a whirl. And you know what? They actually seem to work. There's a slight performance hit, and in certain situations the graphics look as if they're trembling, but rich textures such as images of the ground in *Microsoft Flight Simulator* have taken on a whole new depth and quality. If you keep an eye on forums and newsgroups you'll see a large crowd of people claiming the drivers fixed some annoying Detonator bugs. Certainly feel free to give them a try, but just be warned that NVIDIA does not support them.

Send in your Top Tip to Dear Wandy and win yourself £50



Compare the textures on the tabletop and on the ceiling. The OMEGA drivers deliver a little extra clarity and sharpness, whereas the standard Detonator set are just that little bit blurred. Decide for yourself at [www.omegacorner.com](http://www.omegacorner.com).





# WATCHDOG

**Money. Check. Order product. Check. Delivered. Check.  
It doesn't bloody work! Write to Watchdog. Check...**

■ **WRITING THE WRONGS** Adam Phillips

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Don't worry – we're here to help when you've reached the end of your tether. If you have a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line.

**WRITE TO** Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD

**EMAIL** Alternatively, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Watchdog'

## READ ME!

If you are writing in to complain about a product, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers.

## RED TAPE SPECIAL

We've been running

Watchdog for nearly four years, and, quite frankly, we're amazed by Overclockers ([www.overclockers.co.uk](http://www.overclockers.co.uk)). First a little back-ground info. Reader Mark Brooks wrote and told us how he sent back a new board purchased from Overclockers under the "right to change your mind Internet shopping law," he says. "When I purchased the board, it was £229 plus VAT. In the week I sent it back, and while waiting for a credit, the price of the board dropped to £199 plus VAT."

Mark says that when his money was credited to him, Overclockers credited him the new price of the board only – in other words £199 instead of the £229 he was promised. "It had already been established that I was due a full credit for the board," states Mark adamantly.

Subsequently, Mark says he's contacted Overclockers every week for 12 weeks trying to get the cash back. After various seemingly broken promises, Mark turned to us for help in getting his £30 plus VAT back. You'd think it would be simple to sort out. Instead, it turned into a red tape-wrapped fiasco...

Overclockers insisted Watchdog verify it really was Watchdog of PC ZONE 'fame' – fair enough, we did – although no other company we've dealt with has ever asked this. Secondly, Overclockers demanded in writing that Mark send in confirmation that he wanted Watchdog to fight his corner, and that he was indeed Mark Brooks, and not someone bearing a hoax...

Well, Mark told us he faxed Overclockers this information twice on our request. But there was no sign of either fax at Overclockers. In the meantime, according to Mark, just hours after the first fax was sent, he received confirmation from



**You need a large pair of these to get through Overclocker's red tape...**

Overclockers that the outstanding amount had been credited to him. A mere coincidence, we're sure.

We asked Overclockers to check Mark's RMA number on their computers and the recently dispatched credit – thus providing ample evidence that Mark wasn't a liar. But alas no. Something about the Data Protection Act, suing, whatever.

While we pride ourselves on giving companies the right to reply (and go to great pains to do so), we've decided to print Mark's letter without an official response from Overclockers despite being warned lawyers will get involved if Mark turns out to be no more than Scotch mist and threatened with damnations on the Overclockers website if we print his letter.

Ultimately, we've dealt with many companies in Watchdog over the past few years and none have ever been so difficult, especially over an issue so innocuous.

## RANTING AT THE BIT

We love ranters. Those complaints that spit bile as they land in our inbox. And Mark Syder is one such red mist man: "I bought a LCD monitor from Dabs for £252," says Mark. "Now when you buy something, you expect it without any anomalies. Don't you? Well I do, but that's not what I got."

He discovered his monitor had a dead pixel on the screen. "Now, I know this happens with LCD monitors but what I didn't know was that it's so common," fumes Mark. He then researched the subject more and reckons he found material that states manufacturers actually ship LCD screens with dead pixels and save the pixel-perfect ones for contract and more expensive displays. "Well,

not having this one bit, I e-mailed Dabs asking for a return and so far all I've received is 'sorry we will not take it back because one dead pixel is within tolerance,'" explains Mark.

Dabs did recommend he contact Philips directly who set the 'tolerance levels': "Well bull to that," fumes Mark. "I bought a screen that has 786,432 pixels and that's what I expect."

**Me-oww. So has he got a point? Are the manufacturers and resellers out to get us? Dabs, you stand accused!** "The cosmetic imperfections described by Mr Syder are an unfortunate yet unavoidable result of the current LCD



**Want a 100 per cent pixel perfect LCD monitor? We'd recommend this...**

manufacturing process," offers a company spokesperson. "As such, there is a commonly accepted 'tolerance level' by which LCDs may display such imperfections without being classified as faulty."

The good news though is that while they maintain this position, as a gesture of goodwill, Mark can return the LCD unit to Dabs for a refund. Proof that sometimes a good rant can reap excellent results.

## GAMER.UK.CON?

There's one thing more gutting than being on the receiving end of suspect service from a company you don't know, and that's feeling like you're being shafted by one you do know.

Chris Williams has spent a fair amount with [www.gamer.uk.com](http://www.gamer.uk.com) and used to be happy with them. But then he noticed in October 2002, that, for no

apparent reason, "the company had debited two sums of money from my account," explains Chris. "At that stage, I wrote asking for an explanation and also cancelling all outstanding orders. I also revoked all authorisation to use my credit card details."

With no explanation from the company, he then noticed [gamer.uk](http://gamer.uk) had gone on to debit a further two lumps of money for non-existent orders: "Both these sums of money didn't tally with the prices of any of the preorders I'd made," says Chris. "All of this is irrespective of the fact that all orders had been cancelled and that I had revoked the company's authority to use my card."

Then he received two games in the post. While both were preorders, Chris had actually cancelled them back in October: "I have now simply cancelled my credit card," concludes Chris. "At best, the company's behaviour is unfortunate but more worryingly, it's technically theft and potentially fraudulent. I am now left with two unwanted games not knowing if I will ever receive a reply from the company."

We asked [gamer.uk](http://gamer.uk) to offer an explanation for their (in)actions: "We have now spoken to Chris Williams who explained that he was very happy with the service he had received until a problem occurred with games that he had pre-ordered," says the company. "We have dealt with each order individually via telephone with Mr Williams."

Apparently, all problems with your orders have now been resolved and you're once again a happy shopper. But we'd still like to know why the debits were made in the first place and why it took so long to resolve the issues?

## FUTURE SHOCK

Don't talk to Richard Niven about broadband. He's angry. Frustrated. Disillusioned. That brave new world of broadband has treated him cruelly: "I've been wrestling with Telewest Broadband for about three

**"When you buy something, you expect it without any anomalies, but that's not what I got"**

**MARK SYDER IS NONE TOO HAPPY WITH HIS NEW LCD MONITOR**

## THE ACCUSED



**GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT**



## SAINTS NOT SINNERS

Digi-UK

### ▲ EVEN A BLIND SQUIRREL FINDS AN ACORN EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE...

Serving as an interesting comparison to our Dabs LCD story, Nick Zahiri ordered a £550 Samsung LCD screen from Digiuk.com. Unfortunately, that pesky dead pixel problem reared its ugly head, slap bang in the middle of his new pride and joy.

Not exactly enthused by this development, Nick phoned the sales line: "I was told that one dead pixel was within spec and they weren't obliged to do anything about it," he explains. "I would agree but although they weren't actually obliged to do anything, here I am just four days later sat in front of a spanking new, perfect TFT that has been couriered to my door."

▼ We're impressed...

weeks trying to get a straight answer about why my connection is substandard," says an angry Richard. "After three months of excellent service, I'm now getting poor download speeds

took the day off work and rang at 9am. She was told that the courier had the package and should be delivering the PC anytime before 2pm."

Nothing arrived but they were subsequently told it would

## "After months of excellent service, I'm now getting poor download speeds"

**RICHARD NIVEN**  
FRUSTRATED ABOUT HIS BROADBAND CONNECTION

and pings that my 56K modem puts to shame."

He's called Telewest at least eight times, only to be told engineers are aware of the technical fault and that it is long-term. For how long though? Well, nobody appears to know. "As a student, I don't have the time, let alone the money, to be paying £30 a month for a connection that doesn't deliver even half of what it promises," fumes Richard.

Over to Telewest: "I'd like to apologise to Richard Niven for the sub-standard service he has experienced," says a company spokesperson. "It's not acceptable that Richard has suffered prolonged poor performance and has not received clear feedback about a technical issue."

They say they'll get to the root of the problem as soon as possible so you can get back up to speed, Richard. Let us know how it goes...


### DEARLY DEPARTED PC

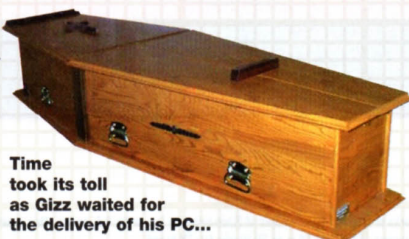
The worst part of buying a new PC isn't the headaches over the spec list or who the hell you should get it from – it's that inevitable wait for your new machine to be delivered as Gizz and his girlfriend discovered. They ordered their machine from Mesh on December 11 and were told it would arrive on January 3.

"We were asked if we could ring up on the morning of delivery to check everything was OK," says Gizz. "So my girlfriend

definitely arrive the following morning. So Gizz took a day off and waited. But again, no show. Then they were told that the PC had gone missing and hadn't even been sent out in the first place. Gizz ain't happy about the wages lost through time off work, and the fact that they were seemingly told porkies about the PC leaving the depot.

Mesh says that Gizz and his girlfriend should never have taken the time off work, as stated on their order confirmation. According to Mesh, it says at the top that delivery dates may vary: "Our sales team are under strict instructions to make sure that the customer knows that the delivery date is an estimate – and it even says 'Estimated Delivery Date' on the order confirmation."

What Watchdog wonders though, is why the couple were given quite so much misinformation in the first place. Perhaps Mesh needs to re-examine its internal lines of communication so that punters like Gizz aren't told that their PC has left the depot when quite clearly it hasn't. 



Time took its toll as Gizz waited for the delivery of his PC...

# Love your Gaming



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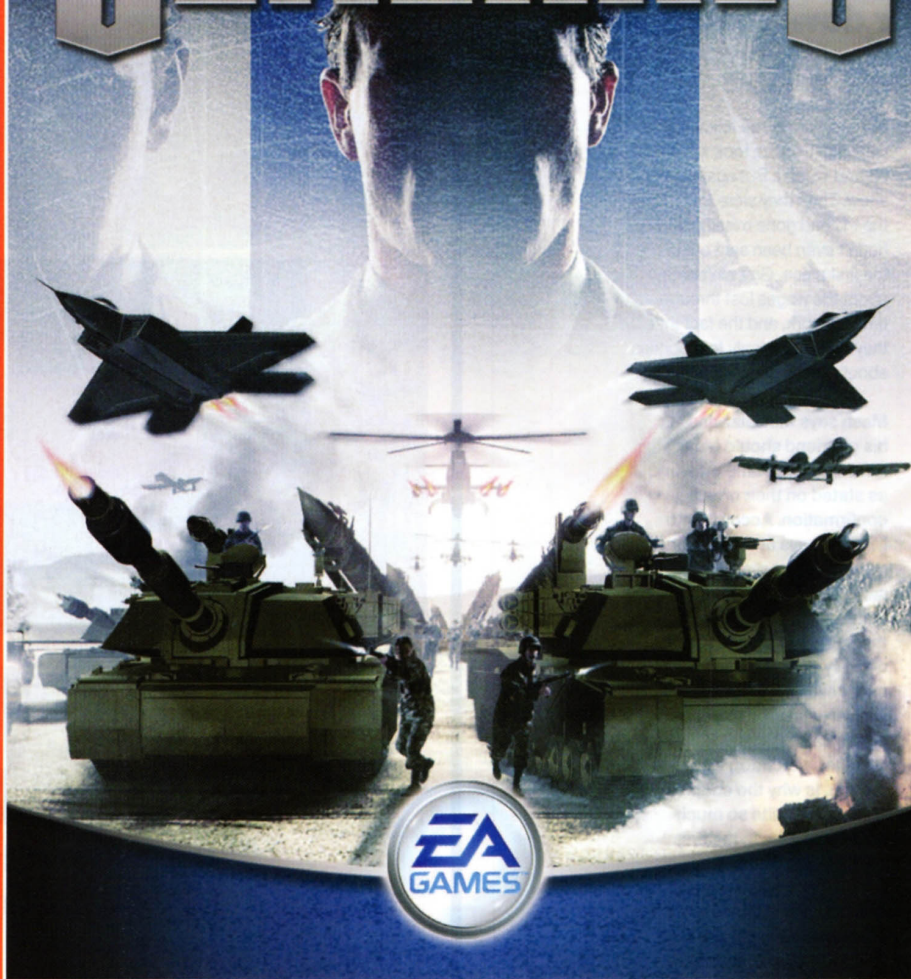
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# VIRGIN

PC CD-ROM

## COMMAND + CONQUER™ GENERALS



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# LOVES



The latest in the best selling Command & Conquer series, Command & Conquer Generals puts your trigger finger on the pulse of modern warfare. Choose your powerful General to control massive armies of bleeding-edge military weaponry across a globe teetering on the brink of Armageddon. Command one of three unique sides, each with customizable high-tech arsenals ready to deliver unprecedented firepower on land or in the skies.

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WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin

megastores



# BUYER'S GUIDE

We've performed massive surgery on our Buyer's Guide to give you an even clearer picture of what makes up the dream games machine. We've got three categories for each component, giving you the Best Performer, the Best Buy and the Best Budget. If you think we've got something wrong, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk), and if we print your suggestion we'll give you a GeForce 4 card from Gainward

BEST PERFORMANCE		BEST BUY		BEST BUDGET	
INTEL MOTHERBOARD	 <b>P4T-533C</b> STREET PRICE £123 MANUFACTURER ASUS TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.asus.com">www.asus.com</a> Following the success of its Intel-850-based P4T, ASUS release a revision based on the i850e chipset for the new 533MHz FSB Pentium 4s. With support for PC1066 RAMBUS and AGP4x, the P4T-533 manages to stand head and shoulders above the competition thanks to clever board design and high-quality components. If you have to have the best then you have to have this.	 <b>845E MAX2-BLR</b> STREET PRICE £112 MANUFACTURER Microstar International TELEPHONE 020 8813 6688 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.msi.com.tw">www.msi.com.tw</a> <b>WAS £113 NOW £112</b>	 <b>GA-8IEX</b> STREET PRICE £91.64 MANUFACTURER Gigabyte TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.gbt-tech.co.uk">www.gbt-tech.co.uk</a> Just because you're working to a tight budget, don't think you have to settle for second best. If you're after an entry-level Pentium 4 then you could do worse than check out the excellent GA-8IEX from Gigabyte. Along with support for the new 500MHz FSB chips and DDR memories comes integrated Creative 5.1 sound and 10/100 network plus six USB2.0. For less than £100 you can't do better.		
	 <b>PENTIUM 4 3.06GHZ (WITH HYPERTHREADING)</b> STREET PRICE £566 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a> As the first CPU to break the 3GHz barrier we knew this 3066MHz chip from Intel was going to be fast. Incorporating a new technology known as 'Hyperthreading' these new CPUs are capable of running like a dual-processor set-up, taking multitasking performance and responsiveness to whole new levels.	 <b>PENTIUM 4 'A' 2GHZ</b> STREET PRICE £149 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a> Pentium 4 'A' (or the 'Northwood' core as it's known) has doubled the cache of the previous-generation chips. Based on a 400MHz bus, the 2GHz chip is compatible with any of the i845/e i850/e motherboards and would be more than respectable in any gaming system. Look at the price difference between this and the top-end Intel chip on the left. Frightening isn't it?	 <b>CELERON 1.8GHZ</b> STREET PRICE £64 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a> With a quarter the cache of the newest Pentium 4s, the Celeron 1800MHz may not seem like it has the necessary guts for a decent gaming system but nothing could be further from the truth. At entry level these chips are a cost-effective way of getting an i845e/i850e system together, which can be upgraded to P4 later simply by swapping chips. It's a brilliant compromise solution.		
AMD MOTHERBOARD	 <b>ASUS A7N8X</b> STREET PRICE £118 MANUFACTURER ASUS TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.asus.com">www.asus.com</a> It's been a long time coming but everything good is worth the wait and finally we've got our hands on the nForce 2 in the form of the A7N8X from ASUS. Bringing everything NVIDIA has promised including DualDDR DDR400, AGP8X, dual LAN, Firewire, USB2.0 and other added goodies such as Serial-ATA, this new board sits numero uno thanks to an excellent feature set and blistering performance.	 <b>K7N420PRO</b> STREET PRICE £83.42 MANUFACTURER Microstar International TELEPHONE 020 8813 6688 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.msi.com.tw">www.msi.com.tw</a> As the top nForce board, the K7N420Pro from MSI beat every KT266/266A offering we put it against. Add to the great performance an integrated GeForce2MX graphics chip plus separate AGP 4x slot, 100Mbit LAN, integrated 5.1 sound, and you'll agree it's perfect for seasoned enthusiasts and first-time gamers alike. Watch out for the nForce 2 boards, arriving next month though.	 <b>GA-7TXH</b> STREET PRICE £83 MANUFACTURER Gigabyte TELEPHONE 01908 362 700 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.gbt-tech.co.uk">www.gbt-tech.co.uk</a> Usurps another great Gigabyte board – this one is a fantastic Via KT266A-based DDR solution. Integrated are both 10/100 LAN and four-channel audio from Creative, which is plenty good enough for gamers. In testing it proved stable and among the faster DDR266 boards for Athlon. A complete bargain if you're looking to build a cheap system around an AMD processor.		
	 <b>ATHLONXP 2700+</b> STREET PRICE £289 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com/gb-uk">www.amd.com/gb-uk</a> While they may not come top of the pile for sheer number crunching with the AthlonXP just yet, AMD is making some substantial steps in that direction – as the new 2700+ CPU proves. Based on a ramped-up 166MHz front-side bus, these new CPUs are more than 10 per cent quicker at the same frequencies. It may lack the fancy Hyperthreading of the new Pentium 4 but then it costs about half as much.	 <b>ATHLONXP 2100+</b> STREET PRICE £83 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com/gb-uk">www.amd.com/gb-uk</a> Running at 1.8GHz, the 2100+ AthlonXP is the quickest of AMD's original AthlonXP chips. Boasting both Quantispeed and 3DNow! Architectures plus fast cache and a 266MHz bus speed, most existing Athlon motherboards will support it out of the box. In terms of bang for your buck this provides the best middle-ground solution for gaming that money can buy.	 <b>ATHLONXP 1800+</b> STREET PRICE £62 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com/gb-uk">www.amd.com/gb-uk</a> Low-end Pentium 4s and AthlonXPs are now getting so cheap they rival the Durons and Celerons of this world – and that's exactly what we have here. AMD has traditionally been the cheaper of the two processor giants, and the AthlonXP 1800+ (top-end equipment not so long ago), is still a bargain even though the price has recently gone up.		
HARD DRIVE	 <b>WD1200JB 120GB</b> STREET PRICE £128 MANUFACTURER Western Digital TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.wdc.com">www.wdc.com</a> With your game and media collections growing every day – some game installs use more than 2Gb of your precious storage – what you need is a really big, fast hard drive and that's exactly what Western Digital deliver with the WD1200JB. 8Mb of cache and spin speeds of 7200RPM mean that this 120Gb beast thrashes all competition beating a large proportion of SCSI drives too.	 <b>BARRACUDA ATA IV 60GB</b> STREET PRICE £72 MANUFACTURER Seagate TELEPHONE 01628 890 366 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.seagate.com">www.seagate.com</a> An old favourite at PC ZONE, the Barracuda ATA IV is packed full of clever technology, which allows this 60Gb beastie to spin at the heady heights of 7,200RPM while sounding much less obtrusive than many 5,400RPM units. Don't underestimate the difference this can make. If you're still struggling with space this could well be worth a dip.	 <b>U SERIES 6 40GB</b> STREET PRICE £64 MANUFACTURER Seagate TELEPHONE 01628 890 366 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.seagate.com">www.seagate.com</a> The U Series 5 drives are now pretty much unavailable, and find themselves replaced in the hallowed PC ZONE Buyer's Guide pages by its younger brother the Series 6. With the same specs as the Series 5 these new drives run even quieter and cooler than before, and provide what must be considered the minimum amount of storage space for any self-respecting gaming system.		



## BEST PERFORMANCE

## BEST BUY

## BEST BUDGET



### DVDRW228

**STREET PRICE** £225.99  
**MANUFACTURER** Philips  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0101  
**WEBSITE** www.philips.co.uk

**NEW ENTRY**

If you're looking for a flexible and future-proof bit of removable storage, this is the box to plump for. It has DVD+RW and DVD+R capabilities, which provide you with up to 4.7Gb of space per disc from a 22 minute burn. It can also handle CDR/RW at 12x and 10x respectively, and the IDE installation is a doddle. At more than £200 it's not cheap but it's a competent performer and as an all-rounder does the job brilliantly.



### CRW3200E-VK

**STREET PRICE** £86.94  
**MANUFACTURER** Yamaha  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.yamaha-europe.com

It might not be as fast as the Plextor drive but this is still a superb buy. Yamaha has consistently been praised for making great long-lasting CD-RW drives, and the 3200 is the companies' current range-topper. The overall bundle is excellent but we particularly love its Audiomaster burning mode for cutting high-quality audio CDs – and we're sure you will too. A veritable bargain if ever we saw one.

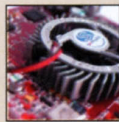


### 40X12X48 CDRW

**STREET PRICE** £45.82  
**MANUFACTURER** LiteOn  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.liteonit.com

The LiteOn 40x12x48 offers stunning value for money, costing slightly more than many standard CD-ROM drives. While maybe not as feature-packed as the Plextor and Yamaha it does have a few tricks up its sleeve, including Smart-Burn – a technology which assesses media quality and adjusts burn speeds to reduce coaster ratio. The best low-cost drive that money can buy.

CD REWRITER



### SAPPHIRE ATLANTIS RADEON 9700

**STREET PRICE** £265  
**MANUFACTURER** Sapphire  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8879 6407  
**WEBSITE** www.sapphiretech.com

We thought it would be months before we'd see boards based on the Radeon 9700 Pro dipping below £300, but Sapphire obviously had other ideas. Delivering the same high framerates as the Hercules card previously listed the Sapphire is around £60 cheaper missing only the cosmetic memory cooling.



### VERTO TI4200 64MB

**STREET PRICE** £112  
**MANUFACTURER** PNY  
**TELEPHONE** 01256 338 609  
**WEBSITE** www.pny-europe.com/uk

The Verto Ti4200 64Mb GeForce4 from PNY is a relatively late arrival. Coming within 20 per cent of Ti4600 in many benchmarks, but costing up to half the price, it has all of the features of the quicker GPU without the dent in your wallet. Overall, we think this is the best solution if you're looking to future-proof your system without spending a ridiculous amount of cash along the way.



### EXCALIBUR RADEON 9000 PRO

**STREET PRICE** £83  
**MANUFACTURER** HiTech  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.hitech.com.hk

The Excilibur Radeon 9000 Pro may not be the fastest DirectX8.1 board but it's certainly the cheapest. Coming in at well under the price of the equivalent Hercules board, it sports ATI's new mainstream GPU and 64Mb of 275Mhz DDR (500Mhz). This HiTech board is a great step-up to playing shader-dominated games for the budget-conscious.

GRAPHICS CARD



### SOUND BLASTER AUDIGY PLATINUM/EX

**STREET PRICE** £162  
**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.europe.creative.com

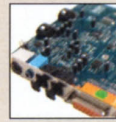
Successor to the Sound Blaster Live! series, the newer Sound Blaster Audigy brings with it a pile of new toys including EAX advanced HD and on-board Firewire. The Platinum/EX card comes with an external breakout box which moves all the important ports and connectors of the Platinum onto your desk.



### AUDIGY2

**STREET PRICE** £85.50  
**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.europe.creative.com

The original Sound Blaster Audigy sat in this slot from the day it arrived, only to be replaced by its next of kin, Audigy2. Delivering further improved audio quality, though this time over 6.1 channels of Dolby Digital EX, Audigy2 is the first soundcard to receive THX certification and deliver the fidelity required to reproduce new formats such as DVD-Audio. Pound-for-pound it's the best gaming soundcard in the world.



### GAMESURROUND FORTISSIMO II DIGITAL EDITION

**STREET PRICE** £32  
**MANUFACTURER** Hercules  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** www.hercules-uk.com

As a frequent offender on the PC ZONE Buyer's Guide, the Fortissimo II lived in the Best Bargain slot for many months – only to be replaced by its doppelgänger the Fortissimo II Digital Edition – which adds 5.1 for your DVDs and an even better software bundle.

SOUNDCARDS



### INTELLIMOUSE EXPLORER V3.0

**STREET PRICE** £37  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk

Probably the cheapest upgrade you can perform, but if you're playing with a rubbish mouse it could give you the biggest performance increases. Hardcore gamers love the Intellimouse Explorer v3.0, and we have to agree that it's the best ball-less rodent out there. With improved optical sensors, a better shape and even more responsive buttons it's in a word – fragtastic.



### MX500

**STREET PRICE** £32  
**MANUFACTURER** Logitech  
**TELEPHONE** 020 7309 0127  
**WEBSITE** www.logitech.com

Microsoft might dominate the mouse market but it hasn't got everything its own way. The MX500 is one of the most interesting mice we've seen for a while now. The left and right buttons are hidden – being integrated into the upper shell of the body and on top of the fourth and fifth buttons. There are two either side of the wheel to assist scrolling, plus one that emulates Alt-Tab. Very handy.



### OPTICAL MOUSE BLUE

**STREET PRICE** £27  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk

For gamers who don't need five buttons and a portable back-scratcher on their mice, we present the Optical Mouse Blue. With all of the high-tech optical wizardry of the other Microsoft mice, this funky blue three-buttoned offering is extremely comfortable to use and is perfect for RPG/RTS titles – or FPS-ers who prefer to keep most of their controls on the keyboard.

MICE



### PRO KEYBOARD

**STREET PRICE** £50  
**MANUFACTURER** Apple  
**TELEPHONE** 0800 039 1010  
**WEBSITE** www.apple.com/uk

While it may seem odd to have a Mac product among all this PC goodness we have good reason. Rather than faff around with 15 multifunction buttons which don't help at all in fast-paced gaming, the Pro Keyboard from Apple is simply the best USB offering out there. Quality components make it one of the most quiet and compact offerings money can buy. Remember, you get what you pay for.



### OFFICE KEYBOARD

**STREET PRICE** £27.20  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk

Microsoft's office keyboard may seem more focused at the professional market with the MS Office buttons across the top, but we found the scroll wheel and remappable keys brilliant in many games – in some situations acting like an additional mouse wheel, one for weapons, the other for items. Handy shortcuts abound and brilliant all-round performance make this our new Best Buy.



### MULTIMEDIA KEYBOARD

**STREET PRICE** £21.14  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk

The Multimedia Keyboard can only be described as the geek's friend. With support for many of the Windows XP customisations plus dedicated buttons for the instant messenger app of your choice and a central console of buttons to drive media player, life doesn't get much simpler, and, at under £25, not much cheaper either. If you're struggling with a poor keyboard give the pub a miss for one night and get this.

KEYBOARDS



### WINGMAN CORDLESS

**STREET PRICE** £34.07  
**MANUFACTURER** Logitech  
**TELEPHONE** 020 7309 0127  
**WEBSITE** www.logitech.com

The PC might not have a definitive gamepad just yet, but this is as close as it gets for the moment. The infra-red interface doesn't hinder your input. On the contrary, the fact it's wireless means your desktop is less cluttered and the discreet receiver is almost invisible. Comfortable to use and a doddle to set up, it makes the grade as best performance but only by a short distance.



### FIRESTORM DUAL-POWER GAMEPAD

**STREET PRICE** £24.99  
**MANUFACTURER** Thrustmaster  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** www.thrustmaster.co.uk

This wired, force-feedback version of the Firestorm wireless might not win any awards for looks, but its ergonomics are great. Decent soft grips with superbly placed buttons and a decent d-pad make precision control a breeze. Set-up couldn't be simpler and the rumble ain't bad either. A no-nonsense pad for no-nonsense gamers.



### SIDEWINDER PLUG 'N' PLAY

**STREET PRICE** £12.92  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder

Four buttons, two triggers, directional pad and USB. Dead simple, dead effective and at under £13 really rather cheap. The Plug 'n' Play gamepad is the new basic controller from the Seattle sidewinders and comes in funky transparent plastic, in contrast to the gloomy black pads of yesteryear. We've used them in the office for years and we've never heard a word against them.

JOYPAD



## BEST PERFORMANCE

## BEST BUY

## BEST BUDGET

### JOYSTICK



#### HOTAS COUGAR

**STREET PRICE** £249

**MANUFACTURER** Thrustmaster

**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881

**WEBSITE** www.thrustmaster.co.uk

Have we finally snapped? £249 for a joystick?

You could get a brand new GeForce 4 for that and still have enough change to go out on the razz for a couple of weeks. Ah, but the HOTAS is probably the finest flight stick in the world, complete with tome-like manual. For those that have everything this is the closest you'll get to sitting in a plane... If you're strong enough to lift it out of the box.



#### SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK 2

**STREET PRICE** £52.87

**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft

**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100

**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder

The Sidewinder Force Feedback 2 is a fine stick with perhaps the best, most refined force-feedback settings around. Performance is great overall, with the infra-red activation sensors in the handle. Its huge base will keep it planted on your desk and as long as you don't mind the extra wiring for the external power supply, it makes a great enhancement for any airborne frolics.



#### CYBORG 3D GOLD

**STREET PRICE** £30

**MANUFACTURER** Saitek

**TELEPHONE** 01454 451 900

**WEBSITE** www.saitek.co.uk

Saitek's current generation of sticks are fabulous. The Cyborg Gold is a top-line, former Best Buy, USB stick that excels across the board. The design is superb, both durable and adjustable – even the left-handed are catered for with response and accuracy both unequalled. If you're not interested in force-feedback effects (and to be honest who is these days?) this is the stick to go for.

### SPEAKERS



#### MEGAWORKS 510D

**STREET PRICE** £299.62

**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.uk.europe.creative.com

The Megaworks 510D is the Daddy of gaming speakers – five 70W satellites and one 150W digitally amplified subwoofer together deliver 500W of power to recreate subtle sounds and devastating explosions alike. Want to know how those soldiers on Omaha Beach in *Medal Of Honour* really felt? Now's your chance. Just make sure your neighbours are away first.



#### PROMEDIA 4.1

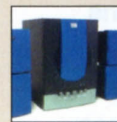
**STREET PRICE** £299

**MANUFACTURER** Klipsch

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.klipsch.com

Klipsch's Promedia 4.1 took Best Buy many months ago with their TXH-Approval and great sound reproduction. They're beautifully made, sound amazing and are the first speakers to split your ears as well as the Crossfires from VideoLogic did. Whether you're a gamer or an audiophile looking for your PC to make sweet music, these are the business, as long as you can find an outlet willing to serve them up.



#### XPS210

**STREET PRICE** £40

**MANUFACTURER** Hercules

**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881

**WEBSITE** www.hercules-uk.com

Who needs surround sound? Answer: everyone who can afford it. For everyone else, this small but perfectly formed 2.1 speaker set-up is cheap – but doesn't sound it. With tone controls and stereo enhancement, it's an ideal solution for desktop gaming. The satellites and subwoofer are well matched, giving decent overall sound. And adorned in royal blue it looks the part too...

### HEADPHONES



#### HD600

**STREET PRICE** £200

**MANUFACTURER** Sennheiser

**TELEPHONE** 01494 551 551

**WEBSITE** www.sennheiser.co.uk

The HD600 are Audiophile-level headphones, and unless used with a soundcard like the Audigy Platinum/EX are total overkill for most gamers. That doesn't stop their fantastic response range from reproducing every gunshot and explosion perfectly with bass so deep and strong you'll be convinced your speakers are running too. They won't obviously – you'll have sold them to finance these.



#### HD497

**STREET PRICE** £47

**MANUFACTURER** Sennheiser

**TELEPHONE** 01494 551 551

**WEBSITE** www.sennheiser.co.uk

Replacing the HD200 Masters, which used to occupy our Best Buy slot comes the HD497, also from Sennheiser. These new headphones have an enhanced frequency response range which might not come close to the HD600, but is still pretty damn good. Their extremely comfortable design coupled with easily replaceable parts, mean these headphones could well outlast your PC.



#### GAMEVOICE USB

**STREET PRICE** £34.07

**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft

**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100

**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com

When are headphones more than just headphones? Simple – when they're the Microsoft Gamevoice USB. The Gamevoice allows you to talk to your mates online as you play clan games with a handy control panel which lets you switch between comms channels. Adding a new dimension to your online gaming, and doubling as a decent set of headphones they're a bit of a bargain.

### TFT



#### 180MT

**STREET PRICE** £939

**MANUFACTURER** Philips

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.philips.co.uk

The 180MT from Philips is more than just a flat panel. An 18in fourth-generation screen with VGA connectivity plus inputs for Scart, S-Video and an RF tuner mean that you can ditch your telly and pipe all manner of consoles, TV and video kit through the one screen. You can even use picture-in-picture to watch the latest *Futurama* while you die repeatedly in *BF1942*. Classic.



#### SYNCMASTER 181T

**STREET PRICE** £599

**MANUFACTURER** Samsung

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.samsung.com

What do you need to be heralded as our Best Buy in the TFT category? You need to boast top specs, which the 181T provides with a response time of 25Ms, a contrast ratio of 500:1 and rated brightness of 250 cd/m2. This results in a cleaner, crisper picture than our previous award-winner. A good start but the 181T is also cheaper and bigger (a whole inch diagonally) which completes the perfect package.



#### T1620B

**STREET PRICE** £522.87

**MANUFACTURER** Sharp

**TELEPHONE** 0800 262 958

**WEBSITE** www.sharp.co.uk

Sharp's 16in T1620B is more than £100 cheaper than the iiyama and delivers all the visual goodies albeit on a smaller display area. Delivering 1280x1024 on a digital 75Hz, this screen will make your games look great while allowing you to reclaim some desktop real estate from large lumbering CRTs. If TFTs aren't quite affordable yet, this proves that the day isn't far away.

### MONITOR



#### GDM-FW900

**STREET PRICE** £1,139

**MANUFACTURER** Sony

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.sony.co.uk

Do you remember the day when PCs used to ship with 14in screens? Pah. The gigantic 24in GDM-FW900 from Sony has to be seen to be believed. Costing almost double that of the iiyama Vision Master Pro 512, you'd expect something special and that's exactly what you get. Supporting nutty resolutions such as 2304x1440 at 80Hz, you can be sure this ultra-flat screen will deliver a rock-solid picture at all times.



#### VISION MASTER PRO 512

**STREET PRICE** £527.27

**MANUFACTURER** Iiyama

**TELEPHONE** 01438 745 482

**WEBSITE** www.iiyama.co.uk

Equipped with the latest Mitsubishi aperture grille Diamondtron screen, it has a smaller viewable area than suggested – 20in instead of 22in, but gives outstanding results at resolutions up to 2048x1536 at 85Hz – something many graphics cards can't even support. There's also a four-port USB hub and integrated speakers which are OK for Windows, but may be tinny for games or music.



#### 720P 17-INCH CRT

**STREET PRICE** £116.32

**MANUFACTURER** Hansol

**TELEPHONE** 01252 360 400

**WEBSITE** www.hansol-uk.com

For the budget-conscious gamer Hansol is a company well worth a look. With a fabulously low price, it does 1280x1024 at an excellent 85Hz (and for those mad enough, 1600x1200 at 75Hz). Focus is tight and the picture sharp, and considering you're paying a little over £100 there's not a lot that will touch this for the money. If you've still got a 15in monitor, consider yourself rebuked.

### MP3 PLAYER



#### APPLE IPOD

**STREET PRICE** £388 inc VAT

**MANUFACTURER** Apple

**TELEPHONE** 020 8210 1000

**WEBSITE** www.apple.com/ipod

With all of the styling of their desktop systems, the iPod caused a few dropped jaws for looks alone. Packing a 20Gb hard disk and speedy Firewire interface, the new models are finally Windows-compatible and come with excellent headphones and a tiny little inline remote control that means you don't have to keep fishing it out of your pocket to change tracks or up the volume.



#### ARCHOS JUKEBOX MULTIMEDIA

**STREET PRICE** £330 inc VAT

**MANUFACTURER** Archos

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.archos.com

While it may never win any awards for aesthetics, the Jukebox Multimedia from Archos is the Swiss Army knife of media players. Handling one of the widest selections of file types the player can even play back a selection of video formats including DIVX. Sound is fantastic but as with a lot of other players on the market, the bundled headphones are shite.



#### MUVO

**STREET PRICE** £99.99

**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs

**TELEPHONE** N/A

**WEBSITE** www.europe.creative.com

The MuVo is one of the smartest gadgets we've seen. It comes in two parts, a USB key that plugs into any system running XP (without drivers), and a battery housing. Plug it into your PC and you can back up your documents. Drag a few MP3s onto the drive and when you snap the two halves together and plug in some headphones you've got one of the smallest MP3 players on the market.





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- ▶ IEEE 802.11b
- ▶ Bandwidth: 2.4 GHz



**£50**

SKU/Itemnumber: 115295



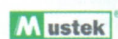
#### LG CD recorder IDE 52x/24x/52x

- ▶ SuperLink for Buffer Underrun Error Protec.
- ▶ Cache / Buffer Size: 2 MB
- ▶ Internal Retail



**£75**

SKU/Itemnumber: 114962



#### Mustek Gsmart Mini LCD 3 Dig.cam.

- ▶ 2.1 megapixel, 3 in 1
- ▶ 16 MB memory
- ▶ Focus Adjustment: Focus free



**£115**

SKU/Itemnumber: 109593



#### Western Digital Caviar 120 GB IDE

- ▶ Special Edition, 8MB cache WD1200JB
- ▶ Spindle Speed: 7200 RPM
- ▶ Interface type: DMA/ATA-100 (Ultra)

1 GB is defined as 1,000,000,000 bytes with regard to hard drive capacity.



**£195**

SKU/Itemnumber: 110695



#### Hansol H530 15" LCD

- ▶ 1024 x 768 resolution @ 75Hz (optimum)
- ▶ 25 ms pixel rate for fast moving images
- ▶ Energy-efficient 12V power output



**£250**

SKU/Itemnumber: 114094



#### Sapphire Radeon 9700 Atlantis PRO

- ▶ 128 MB DDR-SDRAM
- ▶ ATI 9700PRO, DVI, TV-Out
- ▶ AGP 8x, Retail



**£125**

SKU/Itemnumber: 113993



#### MSI KT4 ULTRA-BFISR mainboard

- ▶ SATA, IEEE1394, ATX
- ▶ Chipset: VIA KT400
- ▶ BlueT, GbLAN

We update the prices continuously on our sites, so for fully updated price specifications, wide and varied assortment and real-time stock levels please check our webshops:

UK & N.Ireland: [www.komplett.co.uk](http://www.komplett.co.uk)  
Eire: [www.komplett.ie](http://www.komplett.ie)  
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# EXTENDED PLAY

Finishing a game is only the beginning in Extended Play. Maps, mods, add-ons and extras are all here to help you get the most out of the games you play

## POINTS OF VIEW



■ ANNE ROBINSON Rhianna Pratchett

▲ As you know, we don't like to rest on our laurels here at ZONE, which is why we're constantly evolving the magazine so it stays fresh and interesting, and feedback from you is the best way we can find out whether we're hitting the spot. There are several ways you can let us know your views – via our letters (letters@pczone.co.uk), our PC ZONE dedicated forum at www.pczone.co.uk (which we regularly monitor and contribute to), or by snail mail to PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD.

So what would you like to see on the pages of Extended Play? Do you like what we're doing? Would you like us to bring something back, or cover areas you feel are being neglected? Email me your thoughts at sectioneditor@pczone.co.uk. And before you ask, naked pictures of the team will never happen. Believe me, it's for the best.

Back to this issue, if you've ever been elated by your performance in *Counter-Strike* or emerged battle-worn from a three hour *StarCraft* marathon and thought, "Hell, I could do this for a living," then our guide to being a great gamer on p134 will show you the way. And if you do end up earning some cash out of it, don't forget who it was that put you on the road to greatness.

## Something For Nothing

ON THE CD DVD

More carnage courtesy of Digital Extremes

■ [www.unrealtournament2003.com](http://www.unrealtournament2003.com)

**AS IF UNREAL** *Tournament 2003* didn't already have enough maps to its name, good old Digital Extremes have unleashed their first official bonus pack to offer even more life to their multiplayer behemoth, and you can find it on this month's discs. Fans of deathmatch, CTF and bombing run games can rejoice as six new maps have been added to the already mammoth selection of arenas.

First up are the deathmatch maps. Grendel's Keep sees you battling through a medieval castle in relatively close quarters. Reminiscent of some of the *QIII* maps, this is a fast and furious DM map and you'll want to use your riot shield when the laserbeams start flying. Osiris is

a beautiful temple arena, where dust seeps from the vast pillars above, adding an extra graphical polish that leaves some of the game's other maps looking rough around the edges. Finally there's *Ironica*, which features another castle-like setting with vines draped across the corridors as the slaughter ensues below.

Bombing run fans will be happy to have another map to add to their repertoire too, this time in the form of the barren wastelands of the *Electric Fields*. With three levels and plenty of opportunity to fall off, this is a great map for sniper support and coordinated team combat. What's more, there's also a CTF version included for those who fear the lonesome

vulnerability of carrying the ball in bombing run games. Finally, on the CTF front, there's an updated version of the classic *Lava Giant* map from *Unreal Tournament*. With a keep at each end and huge canyons below the narrow paths to the central mountain, this is an awesome map for snipers that will have multiplayer games swinging back and forth for hours.



**"Six new maps have been added to the already mammoth selection"**



Bombing run is all about teamwork.



Try to dodge the flying corpses as you blast your way to victory.

## CHEATS AHoy!

ON THE CD DVD

The old Cheat Master section of these pages may be dead, but we haven't buried it completely. Check out our cover discs where the art of cheating is still very much alive and kicking. You can find all the latest cheats for your favourite games under CheatStation in the Extended Play section of the discs.

This month we've got everything you need to cheat your way through *Aliens Vs Predator: Primal Hunt*, *Madden NFL 2002*, *Submarine Titans*, *Dungeon Keeper 2*, *Ghost Recon* and *Commandos: Beyond The Call Of Duty*. And in case you're in any doubt, just remember: those who can, do... those who can't, cheat. It's the only way.





**134 THE GUIDE**  
Make cash from playing games



**138 THE MOD SQUAD**  
Get your money's worth



**140 DISC PAGES**  
All the demos you need



**146 FIGHT CLUB**  
Who's the hardest?

# Unreal University

Return to Discworld with the *Harold Stibbins* mod for *Unreal II*

■ [www.discworldmod.net](http://www.discworldmod.net)

**IF YOU WERE** one of the ones who hung your lucky potato over your PC in the hope that there would be a sequel to *Discworld Noir*, it looks like your prayers have been answered with the latest *Unreal II* mod. Not the official sequel we've all been hoping for perhaps, but a move in the right direction.

The hero of the tale is one Harold Stibbins, after whom the mod is named. A drunk and a low-life, your adventure begins after someone steals your shoe, which can only mean that something sinister is afoot in Ankh-Morpork. Soon you'll be uncovering plots that will take you through locations from the *Discworld* books including the vampire-ridden Überwald.

Unlike the point-and-click adventures of old, Harold compliments his witty dialogue with an arsenal of knives (yes, it is spelt that way) and gnomes, with the occasional cod thrown in. A must-see for fans, and those lamenting the death of adventure games.



Harold Stibbins is looking pretty stunning using the *Unreal II* engine.

## SHORTS

### ENTER THE WEBSITE



Following our exclusive look at the new *Enter The Matrix* game in issue 124, Shiny has now launched the game's website which features new shots, downloads and info on the next big thing in movie licensed gaming. What are you waiting for? Fire up a browser and take a look at [www.entertthematrixgame.com](http://www.entertthematrixgame.com).

### BATTLE WEARY



**ON THE DVD** The last patch for *BF1942* helped change the poor single-player element of the game while giving the burgeoning community a wealth of other updates. Digital Illusions has quickly followed up with yet another patch (1.3), which helps improve online performance and also includes a new stand-alone server.

### SHADOWS OF ANARCHY



If you managed to fight your way through *Anarchy Online*'s army of bugs and lag problems, and have remained a devotee of the futuristic MMORPG, then head over to [www.anarchy-online.com](http://www.anarchy-online.com) where you can find the latest info and gorgeous looking screenshots on Funcom's recently announced sequel *Shadowlands*.

### HONE YOUR CRAFT



**ON THE DVD** Strategy fans can find the latest patch (1.05) for the ever-popular *Warcraft III: Reign Of Chaos* on this month's discs. The patch will carefully coax your copy of *WC3* to the optimum level of greatness, plus it also squashes the particularly annoying bug that has previously allowed all the castles and keeps to resist attacks for extended periods of time.



The estate agents of the future.

## Neocron

■ [www.neocron.com](http://www.neocron.com)

**YOU DON'T GET** much for free nowadays. In fact, you'd be lucky to pick up a free cheesy morsel on a cocktail stick at your local deli counter. Bucking the trend, developer Reaktor has seen fit to significantly expand the *Neocron* universe later this spring, with a huge expansion pack *Beyond The Dome Of York* that's free to anyone in the *Neocron* community.

As well as a whole new city to run around in, players will also be able to buy their own condo, while clans can buy up swathes of flats, rip off their tenants and embark on lives of organised crime. If only all game developers could come up with such tasty goodies. We'll have it on our discs as soon as it's available.



Much more detail than the norm.

## Counter-Strike

■ [www.games-fusion.net](http://www.games-fusion.net)

**ON THE DVD** **SOME MIGHT SAY** that a game with a large mod community is a successful one. And when you consider three of the most modded games of all are the *Half-Life*, *Quake* and *Unreal* series, then the theory starts to gain weight. But it's rare that a mod itself should be successful enough to spawn its own community of user-made add-ons and alterations. But *Counter-Strike* is a rare mod indeed.

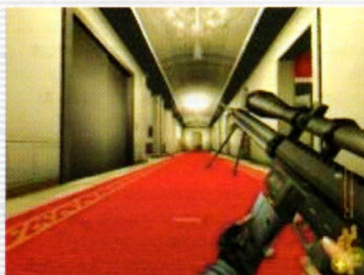
While we wait for *Condition Zero*, Fusion pack 10 is here to modify the weapon models, player models, sounds, sights and general look of the world's most popular mod, with stunning high-res textures and a built in POD bot that allows for a great single-player experience.

## Strike-Force

■ [www.strike-force.com](http://www.strike-force.com)

**ON THE DVD** **STRIKE-FORCE FOR** *Unreal Tournament* was one of the few mods that we felt stood shoulder to shoulder with the likes of *Counter-Strike* and *Tactical Ops*. Great features such as the ability to sprint and a heartbeat monitor that shows your ongoing stress levels made it a superb mod in every way.

We've got the latest 1.18 update for you this month, and you'll find that not only does it eliminate some annoying bugs such as the death lag and knife bug, but it also contains lots of gameplay tweaks like shorter grenade rolls. Plus there's also the new G36 scope to play with. And this time the m203 does shoot real grenades, and you can't say fairer than that.



Better lighting than in the real world.



# THE GUIDE: HOW TO BE A GREAT GAMER...

... and maybe, fingers crossed, make some cash in the process. Adam "Road P155a" Phillips uncovers the unwritten rules for the gaming god wannabes among you

**IT'S THE** final round. The hall's packed with more than 1,000 people watching your every move on the giant screens overhead. They're joined by tens of thousands of spectators online all baying for the same thing. Blood.

Your opponent sits opposite you in the arena, his eyes glued to his monitor. With a final click of the mouse, you land the killer shot. The hall erupts with shouts and cheers. You sit back, wipe your brow and realise that you're the world's best gamer. And you've just won US\$100,000, a car and a very lucrative sponsorship deal. Oh, and glory; lots and lots of glory...

And they said your gaming addiction would never amount to anything. The naïve fools. Time to quit the day job...

## IN THE BEGINNING...

It's any hard-nosed gamer's dream. One that has become a reality for an elite few but, for the rest of us, a dream that's seemingly unattainable. While we might pride ourselves as a cut-above those wretched casual gamers, we know deep down that we've got a fair way to go.

So what if you want to improve your gaming skills? To raise yourself out of that pit of mediocrity? Will flicking a game's settings to Hard instead of Medium really give you a shot

at becoming world famous for your gaming prowess? Not a chance, and that's why **PC ZONE** offers you the following advice for honing and perfecting that untapped potential...

## PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS...

A gamer can't excel at every genre. So think about what you want to specialise in. Is it the first-person shooter? The real-time strategy? Or is it racing round in a virtual F1 motor? And don't worry about 'niching' yourself – for those wanting the big time, there are competitions that cover pretty much every genre of gaming. From *Counter-Strike* and *Team Fortress Classic* compos run by the Cyberathletes Professional League to *Warcraft III*, which featured in the Intel Masters competition, through to *Age Of Empires* and *FIFA* at the Samsung World Cyber Games.

## IT'S ALL IN THE HARDWARE...

A bad workman always blames his tools. Well, in this instance, it might just be true. Never mind your actual gaming skills, having the right kit can make the difference between winning and losing...

## THE MOUSE

The traditional mechanical mouse has long been dead

in the eyes of pro gamers. That old roller ball simply can't cut it anymore with today's pin sharp shooters. Step forward the optical mouse, that bounces light off your mouse pad straight back to the mouse's highly-tuned sensors, providing the punter with the best in rapid hand-movement tracking.

The sample rate of these new mice is the key to maximising your fragging, which is measured in samples per second. The higher the sample rate the more accurate and responsive the mouse. First-generation optical mice such as the Intellimouse Explorer shifted 1500 samples/sec, a quantum leap from the equivalent 450 samples made by a ball-based rodent. Even better, however, are the new second-generation mice, the Explorer v3 for instance, which deliver 6,000 samples and will make a difference for all but the most uncoordinated gamers.

Finally, there are cordless mice. While the majority sacrifice accuracy by using crude, laggy radio technology, there are a couple of gems to be had such as Logitech's MX700 and the



**The Bluetooth Explorer mouse – the thinking gamer's choice.**

Wireless Intellimouse Explorer for Bluetooth. Neither are cheap, but then nor is the low-latency high-tech wireless shenanigans they've crammed inside.

## THE KEYBOARD

Some stalwarts insist that the left-hand side of the keyboard is a no-go area for any serious FPS fan. That only the cursor keys are right for the job, but then they're probably simple folk who get confused when presented with more than four buttons. For the rest of us who prefer the WASD



**You can't go wrong with the Microsoft Multimedia keyboard.**

formation, the Microsoft Multimedia Keyboard is a good choice. With quality switches and good response, plus built in volume and multimedia controls across its top you'll find very little that beats it.

## THE JOYPAD

Console gamers love 'em and it's understandable why – while PC games can throw up key configurations littered all over the keyboard, a well-designed joystick (see PS2 or Gamecube controllers) provides an ergonomically-intelligent, analogue-based device with built-in force feedback as standard, which are ideal for footie and racing games. While the likes of Microsoft's Sidewinder Gamepad are well respected, we reckon it's best to cash out on a converter for a PlayStation 2 Dual Shock 2 joystick with an adapter.

## THE DISPLAY

Utterly vital – it's your 'window' on the gaming world. Fudgy, blurry images aren't going to help you in your quest to become a gaming hotshot. Instead, check out our recommended buys on page 128.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK...

Sorry, sounds tedious but to glean a real edge over the competition, the more you learn about a particular game and all its nuances, the better. Sites such as [www.gamefaqs.com](http://www.gamefaqs.com) offer everything from extensive walk-throughs, bibles on gameplay tactics, weapon profiles, exact respawn times and everything in between – one

of the general FAQs that covers *Counter-Strike* comes in at just under 55 pages while a strategy guide to a single map runs at 12.

For more detailed info on any title, there's also a mass of seriously well-informed sites dedicated to single games or game series. While you're on the Net, drop in on the hundreds of forums and newsgroups where players from all walks of life chat, post questions and are more than willing to answer any serious queries (see Essential Links).

**Freshly revised strategy guides? Weapon profiles? Top tips? Go to GameFAQs.**

**PlanetQuake – one of the many excellent sites dedicated to individual titles as well as various series.**

## THE HUMAN FACTOR

Sooner or later, it's going to be absolutely essential to get yourself online and playing against real people. While AI-driven bots and computer opposition offer sterling competition these days, it's the sheer unpredictable nature of playing against a real person that needs to be experienced.

It can sometimes be daunting for the broadband-armed newbie

## WHATEVER TAKES YOUR FANCY

### COUNTER-STRIKE



### QUAKE III



### WARCRAFT III

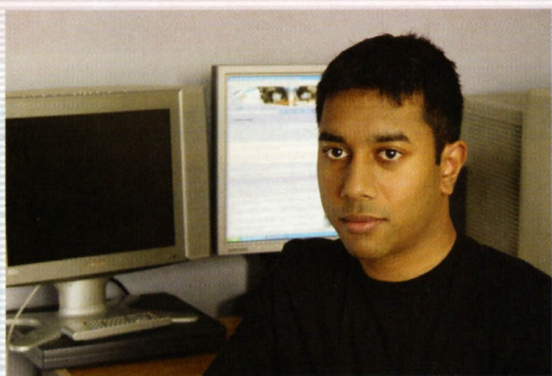


### AGE OF KINGS



**Most genres are catered for with competitions across the globe, but the FPS and the RTS are unsurprisingly the main 'specialist disciplines' of most pro gamers...**





**"You might be able to beat all of your flatmates but no matter how great your aim is or how fast your reflexes might be, it takes a lot of practice to become the best," says Sujoy Roy, UK pro gamer and a key figure at the Virtual Gaming Alliance.**

to go fragging but don't fret, there is hope. Let Sujoy Roy explain. After all, he's the acclaimed UK pro gamer who's now a kingpin at the Virtual Gaming Alliance established three years ago to promote gaming in Britain: "[With something like the FPS] your first stop should be the public free-for-all games where you can get the hang of playing online without too much pressure. There are plenty of competitions going on all the time, on and offline."

Remember though, it still won't be easy. "You might be able to beat all of your flatmates, but no matter how great your aim is or how fast your reflexes might be, it takes a lot of practice to become the best," warns Sujoy. "The good news is that playing against serious gamers is the best way to improve and it won't be long before you're fragging like a pro."

Once you're sufficiently confident enough with your basic skills, it's time to start getting

more serious. One of the best ways of meeting like-minded folk and getting that all-important intensive experience is booking

#### || vga centres

City	Location	Search Names	Phone
Arlow	N/A	Tir Na Nragi	+353 402 91100
Bath	Somerset	Virtual Realm	01225 447466
Birmingham	West Midlands	Global Gaming Arena	0121 693 6455
Blackburn	Lancashire	Huffies	01254 693089
Bracknell	Berkshire	Cyberscape	01344 465954 0790
Bracknell	Berkshire	The @ttic	0870 752 6022
Bristol	Avon	The Lan Rooms	0117 9733866
Burnley	Lancashire	Plexus	0709 2006573 email
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Internet Exchange, Cambridge	Tel: 01223 327 600
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Netbar (Cherston Road)	01223 357268/ 3520
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Netbar (Jesus Lane)	01223 300009
Canterbury	Kent	xTreme IT	01227 789065
Cardiff	Gwent	E-Quest Cardiff	02920 376665
Coventry	West Midlands	Beyond Gaming	024 76225937
Crewe	Cheshire	I-Net WarZ Ltd	0781 4572474
Derby	Derbyshire	Lansport	01332 344177
Derham	Norfolk	Planet LAN Ltd	01362 654126
Durham City	Durham	Reality-X	0191 384 5700
Eastbourne	East Sussex	NetPlay	01323 749974
Edinburgh	Scotland	Pallas Athens Internet Cafe	0131 667 7711
Glasgow	Scotland	Gameland	0141 226 2220, gam
Gloucester	Gloucestershire	SURF: Scorpio	01452 528 030
Gravesend	Kent	Games Genius	0208 310 6910

**The Virtual Gaming Alliance has centres that newbies can visit to get sound advice and a helping hand.**

yourself into LAN events like those run by Multiplay. The company organises weekend parties where participants turn up with their PCs (and sleeping bags) and are plugged straight into Multiplay's own high-speed network. Most genres are

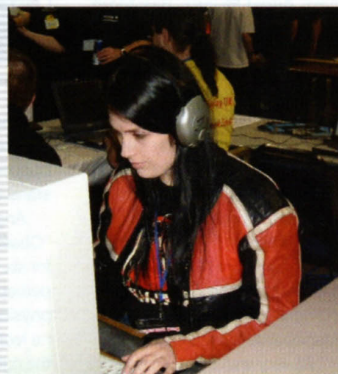
catered for and, more importantly, you can mingle with fellow enthusiasts, get drunk, and eat, breathe and live gaming for days on end without any interruptions.

There are two different sorts of events run by Multiplay – the StratLAN and the i-Series. The latter is usually attended by up to 1,000 people while the former is a smaller, more personal gathering of around 50. There are also cash prizes up for grabs – the winner of i-14 got his grubby mitts on £2,500 for his troubles. Check out page 146 for a chance to win tickets to the i-15 event in March.

#### GOING OFF BIG TIME

So you think you're ready to go after the big boys? Those who have made a mint from their pro gaming skills? Don't go giving up your day job just yet: "Earning enough money to make a living from gaming in the UK is still a little optimistic," reckons Sujoy. "I only managed it two years ago from international sponsorship deals and a lot of travelling!"

While the UK is seen as lagging behind the rest of the world in terms of big cash compos, there are those seeking to redress the balance. The Intel Masters, held at the end of last year, featured 24 clans battling it out at London's Science



**Is that our Rhianna photographed at i-14 last year? Hmm...**

Museum in three 'disciplines' – *Counter-Strike*, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* and *Warcraft III*. With a prize purse of £25,000, one of the winning clans, 4Kings, ended up with a rather healthy cheque for £6,000. Expect Intel Masters to rear its head again at the end of 2003.

The Samsung World Cyber Games in conjunction with the VGA is another ambitious endeavour. As well as UK gamers fighting it out with one another for cash prizes, there's also the chance of being selected for the UK team which travels to Korea (including free

#### THE DON'TS...

- Don't assume you're the best right from the start, or you'll be disappointed.
- Don't play too much – you need exercise and a healthy diet to keep your body and mind in good condition.
- Don't accuse other people of cheating, they're probably not. If you suspect anything, take it to the server admin instead.
- Don't give up if you're losing. Learn from your mistakes.
- Don't quit your job to become a pro gamer unless you've already signed a sponsorship deal!

#### Multiplay's i-Series – a great way to test your skills.



**By all means bring a sleeping bag to LAN events. But a true gamer doesn't need sleep...**

flights and accommodation) to take on the teams from 60 other countries. And the reward for such success? Well, 18-year-old Brit, Samuel Boulton, who came second in the *Unreal Tournament* final last year, walked away with US\$10,000.

Be sure to make a mental note of July 25-27 – it's the UK leg of the Games being held at the Birmingham NEC in conjunction with the XGameShow. They have 6,000 square metres of space lined up for the games and there'll also be a massive 160 PC tournament area plus a theatre-style stage with seating for 500 spectators.

#### STATESIDE

The Americans, of course, have been doing everything on an even bigger scale for a while now. A key entity in the pro-gaming scene stateside is the Cyberathlete Professional League. Set up by Angel Munoz back in 1997, it has now turned into a monster organisation spanning the world (including Europe) with pro gaming competitions and amateur leagues. In grand finals, prize purses of up to US\$200,000 are available.

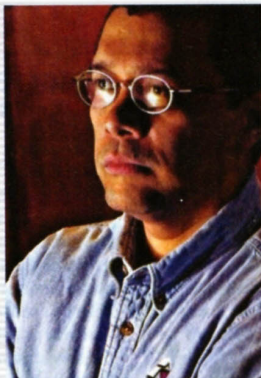


**The World Cyber Games and its many logos. A sure sign that the pro gaming industry is growing up.**





**Samuel Boulton came second in a championship at the Samsung World Cyber Games 2002 and still managed to net himself US\$10,000. The lucky git...**



**"The right mental disposition is the number one common trait of top professional gamers - top gamers are simply not afraid of winning," says Angel Munoz, president of the Cyberathlete League.**

So how has CPL found itself in such a dominating position? Perhaps Angel Munoz's answer shows just how pro gaming is evolving into a hard-nosed commercial venture: "Many companies in this industry are launched with the rhetoric of 'helping gamers' and 'being all about the gamer,'" states Angel. "Then they want to play the Robin Hood role of asking large corporations to solely finance their efforts. CPL is based on the principle that a sport is sustained by the gamers, spectators, sponsors and advertisers all sharing in the expense and the rewards of its growth."

The issue of advertisers and sponsors is utterly vital for the pro gamer who wants to make

a living from their passion as well. For example, 4Kings who triumphed at the Intel Masters have been signed up by Intel, which will provide the clan with the latest Pentium chips, motherboards and custom computer cases. Intel will also be whisking the team round the world to take part in competitions (see Clan-destine Manoeuvres).

All very well but just how do you, the humble gamer, actually prep yourself for all this impending pressure? "Preparing for a gaming tournament is just like getting ready for a sports competition," reckons Sujoy Roy. "If you can stay focused and play to the best of your ability, you're more likely to win.

## AND THE WINNER IS...



**Johnathan "Fatal1ty" Wendel has earned thousands and thousands from his pro gaming, has won a motorbike and a car (OK, so it's a Ford Focus with some rosey Giger artwork on the side but still...) and he's even got his own branded T-shirts. Oh dear...**

The most important thing is to believe that you can beat your opponent, otherwise you don't stand a chance."

Angel Munoz of CPL agrees: "Observing hundreds of gamers for six years has changed my perception of the value of physical traits over mental ones," he reckons. "I now realise that the right mental disposition is the number one common trait of top professional gamers. Top gamers are simply not afraid of winning and train hard to replicate the experience of winning."

And there were some of you thinking this pro-gaming would be a bit of lark... Get practising... [X]

WCG 2002 Grand Final Results				
No.	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1	Korea	3	2	0
2	Russia	3	0	0
3	Germany	2	0	3
4	Chinese Taipei	1	1	0
5	Japan	1	0	0
6	Spain	0	2	0
6	United Kingdom	0	2	0
8	Canada	0	1	0
8	Hongkong	0	1	0
8	Kazakhstan	0	1	0
11	China	0	0	1
11	Italy	0	0	1
11	Netherlands	0	0	1
11	New Zealand	0	0	1
11	Poland	0	0	1
11	Ukraine	0	0	1
11	USA	0	0	1

**The World Cyber Games league - Blighty's running in sixth place. Tied with Spain. The shame...**



**Intel is muscling in on the pro gaming scene...**

**"Preparing for a gaming tournament is just like getting ready for a sports tournament"**

**SUJOY ROY  
VIRTUAL GAMING ALLIANCE**

## CLAN-DESTINE MANOEUVRES

### SOMETIMES PLAYING WITH YOURSELF CAN BE UNHEALTHY...

While the solo experience may be the only real choice for die-hard glory seekers, some of you may find the team-driven nature of clans more suitable - these are made up of a bunch of like-minded folk who club together to create a team who usually specialise in a particular genre. The most successful clans will be made up of 'divisions' who specialise in certain games. Take Intel Masters champs, 4Kings - they have multiple divisions that cater for *RTCW*, *SOF2*, *Q3* and *UT*.

So what are the advantages of playing in a clan? One of the clan's top bods, Toby Aldridge, explains: "Most games these days are team

orientated, so you get into the whole community spirit a lot more, you also get to meet more people, and be part of another family."

So what do they look for in a new addition to their family? "Quick reactions, a cool, calm and collected attitude and, most importantly, aged 18 plus with a decent head on their shoulders."

If you don't fancy your chances of being accepted into the ranks of the 4Kings, create your own clan - get a group of friends, play together regularly (a couple of hours at least four times a week), and join one of the online leagues - see Essential Links for more details.



**4Kings at the recent Intel Masters. And yes, that certainly is Rimmer in the background...**



**The Cyberathlete Professional League - big names, big sponsors, big, big bucks...**

### ESSENTIAL LINKS

BOOK MARK 'EM. READ 'EM. LEARN FROM 'EM

VGA - [www.vga.org.uk](http://www.vga.org.uk)

Info on their UK Gaming Centres and tournaments.

World Cyber Games - [wgc.vga.org.uk](http://wgc.vga.org.uk)

Details on the UK World Cyber Games Event.

ESReality - [www.esreality.com](http://www.esreality.com)

A mass of online gaming news and forums.

XSGameShow - [www.xsgameshow.com](http://www.xsgameshow.com)

Details on the massive consumer gaming event in July at the NEC, Birmingham.

Cyberathlete Professional League - [www.thecpl.com](http://www.thecpl.com)

The home of the world's most lucrative pro gamer league.

Johnathan "Fatal1ty" Wendel - [www.fatal1ty.com](http://www.fatal1ty.com)

The ego has landed. Homepage of the world's 'number one' player...

Multiplay UK - [www.multiplay.co.uk](http://www.multiplay.co.uk)

Find out where and when their next LAN events are going to be...

The 4Kings - [www.four-kings.com](http://www.four-kings.com)

Homepage of one of Britain's most successful clans...

BarrysWorld - [www.barrysworld.com](http://www.barrysworld.com)

Jolt - [www.jolt.co.uk](http://www.jolt.co.uk) - Home of the PC ZONE game servers.

Clanbase - [www.clanbase.com](http://www.clanbase.com)

Ideal places to start your online gaming. Feature leagues tables and rankings.

PC ZONE servers - [www.zonegames.co.uk](http://www.zonegames.co.uk)

Drop in and deathmatch with the best people in the business...



THE MAXIMUM EDGE

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Your Reliable Partner  
[www.abit.com.tw](http://www.abit.com.tw)

**ABIT**

Are You Fast Enough?

00:00:00 2004 2004  
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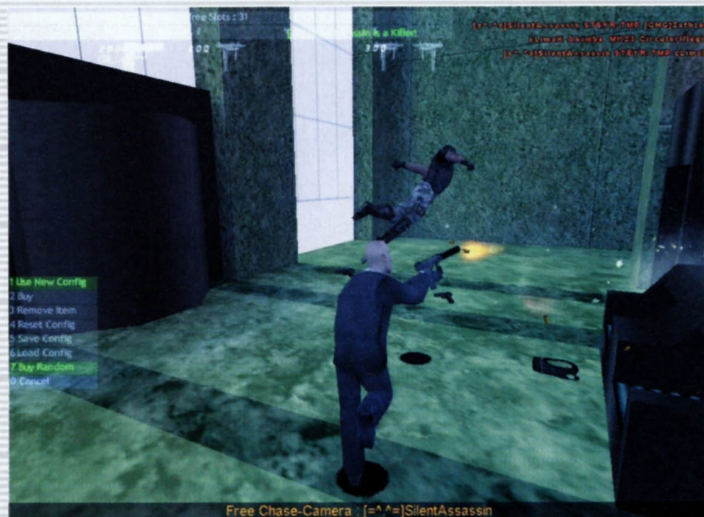
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# THE MODSQUAD

ModMaster **Tony Lamb** with this month's selection



The Specialists is a very well implemented action film genre mod.



Sneaky and cowardly, but oh so much fun...

## THE SPECIALISTS BETA 1.5

TOTAL  
CONVERSION



SIZE 42.8Mb REQUIRES full version of Half-Life

www.specialistsmod.net

### THE SPECIALISTS

is the Samuel L. Jackson of *Half-Life* mods. Super-cool, self-assured and potentially lethal – if a mod could wear shades, this one definitely would. It's a total conversion in the same style as *Action Half-Life* and *The Opera*, and as well-established as those two near-legendary mods are, they'd better start watching their backs because *The Specialists* is full of youthful exuberance and heaving with good ideas.

So far, *TS* features three of its four intended gameplay types, with regular Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch and Team Round-Deathmatch (like TDM but with team respawn 'zones', a kit-buying budget and a fixed three-minute round length) already implemented. The missing game type is called Teamplay and will feature team objectives as well. For the other two, just think *Counter-Strike* with a pair of spanking new Ray-Bans...

One feature that sets *TS* apart from other mods is its devotion to accurately modelling not only the appearance, but also the characteristics of the weapons involved. Sure, in real life you might be able to jump and shoot a Steyr assault rifle at the same time, but your aim would go all to hell and you'd probably get better results at short range with a pistol or SMG – and the same is true in *The Specialists*. This acts as a

suitable foil to the ever-so-clever stunt system which in *TS* is a gem, with rolls, dives, airwheels and the ubiquitous slow-motion – all well-crafted and extremely effective once mastered. You just have to choose your weapons carefully, that's all.

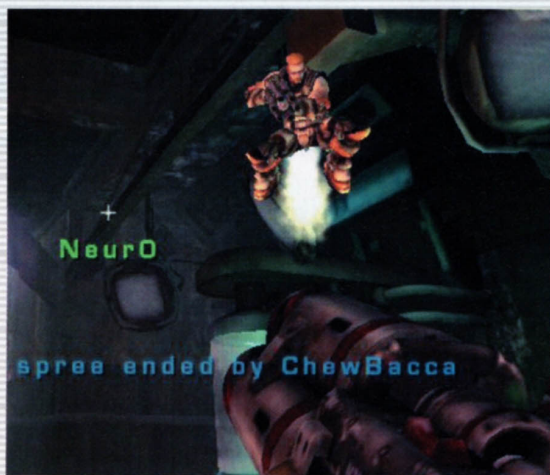
The map has been lovingly created with lots of deformable objects crying out to get blasted into bits. They might be limited in number but shooting them up is great fun and there's even a

copy of the lobby scene from *The Matrix* to wreck. How lucky can you get?! Well, more maps for a start, but those will come.

Server support for *The Specialists* is good, although more players are needed. So install this classy mod right away and get them filled up.

PCZONE  
VERDICT **82**  
Cool as they come

## KING OF THE SERVER BETA 1.4



A jetpack is one of many goodies a high score will earn you.



SIZE 2.2Mb REQUIRES full version of UT2003, patched to version 2166

www.planetunreal.com/kots/

**DERIVED** from a *Quake II* mod of the same name (visit [www.planetquake.com/](http://www.planetquake.com/) nightbreed to find out more if you still have a copy of Q2 knocking around), *KOTS* is a beta with ambition, and no shortage of added extras. Taking a regular Deathmatch environment, *KOTS* employs *UT2003*'s statistics-logging system so that every frag you score goes towards your overall *KOTS* tournament ranking. As you stack-up kills and get points, your standing among the masses of online players

improves and not only can you see your ranking by visiting the *KOTS* website (or even in-game), but you can also unlock a series of player upgrades including regenerating health, faster weapon switching, a jetpack, cloaking effects, stronger armour and the ability to inflict more damage on enemies with every shot. There's more in the pipeline too, with power-up runes, more player upgrades and maybe even new weapons in the offing.

As a beginner, being attacked by a player with a jetpack is pretty frightening (and probably

fatal), but the trick is to persevere and earn one for yourself – so that you can terrify newbies too. Don't give up too soon on *KOTS* as you'll never get to see what the game is all about. Stick with it, and maybe you will rule the roost one day.

PCZONE  
VERDICT **70**  
Takes time to get into







Classic *Quake III* colours and textures put to great use here.

# RUIN HUNTERS

## V1.0 & 1.0A PATCH

ON THE DVD SIZE 73.1Mb **REQUIRES** full version of *Quake III Arena*  
[dynamic.gamespy.com/~mbs/](http://dynamic.gamespy.com/~mbs/)

**RUIN** Hunters manages somehow to be both one of the most addictive, and one of the most annoying mods around. Hours can fly by to the tune of that familiar refrain of 'just one more game'. This is maddeningly good fun...

The gameplay is relatively simple, sticking a bunch of animé cartoon-style characters in distinctly weird and wacky (but fiendishly well designed) maps, it removes the regular *Quake III*-related weaponry and

instead gives you a variety of bombs to hurl. These bombs don't kill the other players, but hopefully blasts them into a variety of traps where they fall and die – hence scoring a point for the bomb hurler. You have a limited amount of manoeuvrability when blown into the air, and can sometimes save yourself – but not always. There are different bomb types too – big and small blast, freeze and fire for example – and as you run around the maps you can

**TOTAL CONVERSION**

pick up the ones of your choice. There are melee weapons too, but to be honest, your chances of getting close enough to use them are slim.

*Ruin Hunters* is arcade madness at its enjoyable best. Totally outlandish and surprisingly addictive it's definitely worth a look.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

**78**

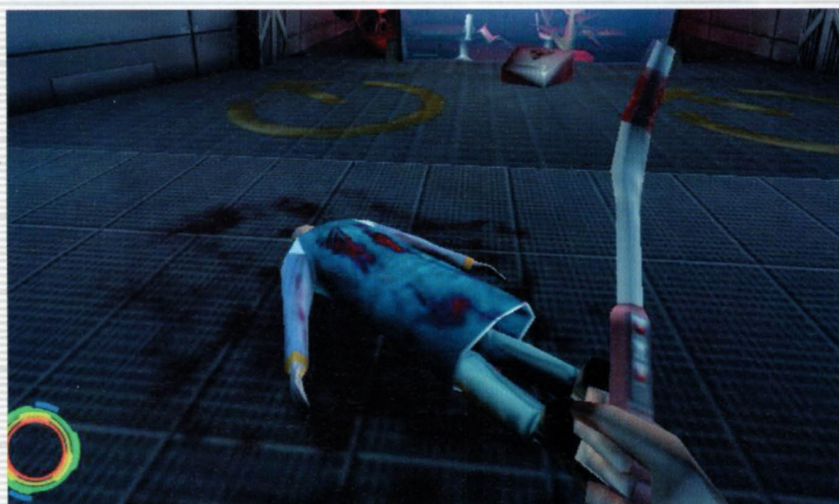
**Bonkers**

# SPATIAL FEAR PROLOGUE

ON THE DVD SIZE 99.6Mb **REQUIRES** full version of *Unreal Tournament*  
[www.planetunreal.com/le/sf/](http://www.planetunreal.com/le/sf/)

**TOTAL CONVERSION**

**SINGLE-PLAYER**



I know how it looks, but I promise you it wasn't me...

**SPATIAL** Fear is a mod you'll either love or hate, depending on whether you go for the creeping-around-feeling-vulnerable school of modding or not. Taking on the role of a

female science officer, you wake from suspended animation and, on exploring your spaceship, discover the rest of the crew dead... Messily so, in most cases. In fact, for the first several levels, dead crewmen seem to be all you'll find, and while the layouts are truly impressive and often highly detailed, the ever-present waiting for action does wear thin. Not that you'll be disappointed in that department when it does arrive as there are plenty of unfriendly aliens later on – but instant action junkies will find the start disappointing. Do persevere though, because

later on this mod comes alive with plenty of new characters, weapons and interactive items appearing as you go.

This being the prologue to *Spatial Fear*, the team say that a lot more features are in development. There's certainly no shortage of atmosphere and lots already to capitalise on. So far, *SF* is an enjoyable, if not frantic, mod with plenty of exploration to do. Nice.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

**77**

**Deep and involving**



The first few levels of *Spatial Fear* are very lonely.



He shoots... he scores!

# DEATHBALL

## V1.4B

**TOTAL CONVERSION**

ON THE DVD SIZE 41.3Mb **REQUIRES** full version of *UT2003*, patched to v2166  
[www.deathball.net](http://www.deathball.net)

**WATCH** out Beckham, move over Sven... the *Deathball* team are here and when the FA tries out this mod, Saturday afternoons might change forever. *Deathball* can best be described as football on acid, with two opposing teams battling to deposit the ball in the enemy goal, but this is as far as the regular footie analogy goes because *Deathball* adds a whole lot more. For a start, every player has a weapon akin to the old *UT* shock-hammer, and with this you can kill opposing players when they're in your penalty or keeper zones, or use the weapon to knock them aside at other times. You can also use it tactically to punt a player into a more favourable position, or, if you can catch the ball yourself, to pass it to a teammate some way away. You can of course use

it to fire the ball at the enemy goal too. Maps and skins are neat (albeit limited in number) and server support is not bad either. Bots make for a fun game, but human players are best. A real LAN-game star.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

**77**

**A game of two halves**





# DISC PAGES

WORDS Mark Eveleigh and Rhianna Pratchett

DISCS Mark Eveleigh

## HELP!

**CD trouble?** Don't worry – phone our helpline on 08700 711 482. The line is open weekdays between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email [pc\\_zone@interchange.co.uk](mailto:pc_zone@interchange.co.uk)

**BEFORE YOU DIAL...** If you are calling the helpline:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, soundcard, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Have a pen and paper to hand, so you can jot down the relevant info.

## MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

■ You need at least a PIII 600MHz or equivalent, with a GeForce 2MX 32Mb graphics card and 128Mb RAM (256Mb recommended for Windows XP users) to run the software on these discs.

## DISCLAIMER

- This disc has been thoroughly tested at all stages of its production. However, it is always wise to use a virus checker on any software before running it.
- Dennis Publishing Limited cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system (including hardware) that may occur while using either the disc or programs and data on it.
- We regret that we are unable to offer technical support for the 10th anniversary disc. Please see p145 for further details.



# BLITZKRIEG

CD1/DVD Pub: Ubi Soft Dev: Nival Interactive

Frankly if we don't have a few more wars soon the games industry might have to start using its imagination again and set some games in places and times that haven't already happened. But for now WWII is always a familiar favourite and as it happens, it's also the setting for *Blitzkrieg* – a *Sudden Strike*-a-like from Nival Interactive.

As demos go *Blitzkrieg*'s is pretty damn meaty, with three single player missions, one each for the Russians, the Allies and the Germans. In the first map you have to

use your entrenched German troops to defend against an infantry and tank attack and then make your way across the river, taking out enemy installations with a variety of units. As the Allies, you have to sneak a scout into a heavily defended German town and take out the anti-aircraft guns before staging an impressive aerial bombardment.

The last mission is basically a survive for as long as you can affair as you take control of a large Russian base and fend off



You air force is just as important as your land troops.

wave after wave of Allied attacks. The missions lets you take control of a variety of different units, including five different types of air units such as paratroopers and heavy bombers, which can devastate enemy tanks.

*Blitzkrieg* might look like the virtual equivalent of those life-size model maps kept in attics by elderly men with trousers up to their armpits and comfortable shoes, but this demo is a great introduction to a detailed and well-structured strategy title.



Trench warfare with ant people.



Parachute a scout behind enemy lines and sneak about a bit.



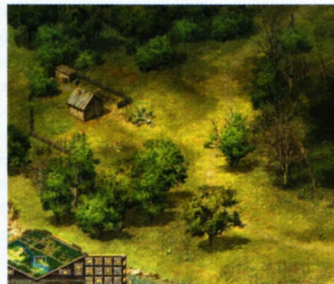
When bombers attack, they really make a meal out of tanks and buildings.

## WALKTHROUGH

FINDING IT A BIT HARD? HERE'S SOME HELP – NO NEED TO TANK US. (SORRY.)



**1** At the start of the first mission keep your troops in the trenches and fend off the incoming infantry. When you get your tank reinforcements sneak them onto the high ground and take out the immobile enemy tanks from the side.



**2** Move your scout across the small wooden bridge to the east and sneak him past the enemy bunker. Use his sniper skills to take out the anti-aircraft gun guards and then use your bombers to destroy the rest of the guns that are on the hill behind the bunker.

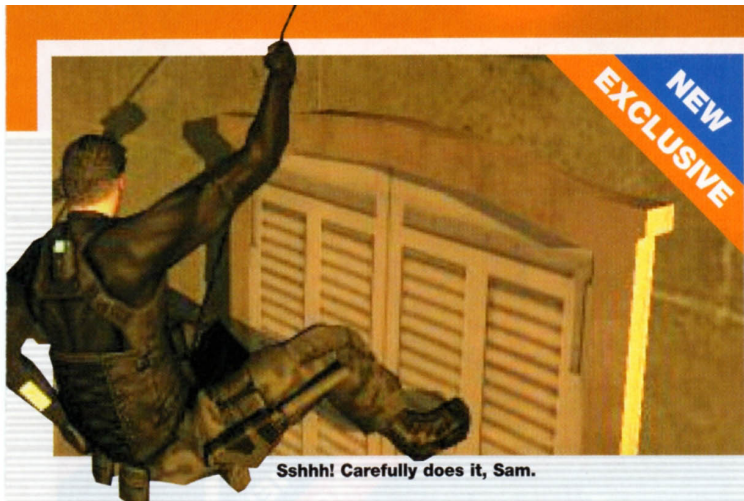


**3** Go back to the Karl mortar and move it towards the bridge, destroy the bunker with some suppressing fire (you will need to re-supply the mortar using the supply truck during this). Use the rest of your troops to take over the railway station.



**4** Start moving your tanks above the area where the arrow on the mini map tells you the enemy tanks are. This way you can attack the enemy from the side, rather than head on. Use your scout to locate them and unleash hell.





NEW  
EXCLUSIVE

Sshhh! Carefully does it, Sam.

# SPLINTER CELL

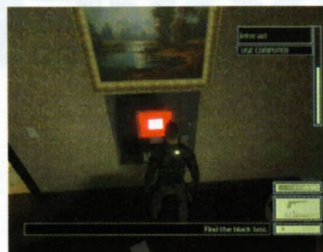
**CD1/DVD Pub:** Ubi Soft  
**Dev:** Ubi Soft Montreal  
**Reviewed:** Issue 125 (94%)



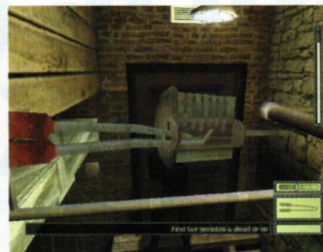
The release of the brilliant *Splinter Cell* might have come a bit later than we predicted (due to some niggling code protection issues), but to make up for it we twisted Ubi Soft's arms and made them give us this second exclusive playable demo which is three times bigger than the first demo and offers a more complete slice of sneaky *Splinter Cell* action. You start off with a level that kicks off in a dead agent's apartment. You've got to make it to the police station which is the scene of the original demo, before making your way to the terrorist-filled Kalinatek offices. There are plenty of opportunities to shoot out lights, distract guards with tossed coke cans, pick locks and zip down lines. Just remember: stay out of the light.

## WALKTHROUGH →

### HIDING IN THE SHADOWS OF THE FIRST MISSION



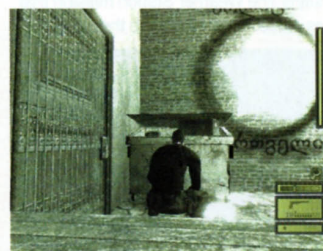
**1** Once you've found your way into the apartment, head straight through to the bedroom. The info you need is hidden behind a painting. Key in the code to exit (it's on data stick).



**2** Slide down the zipline on your left and through the door on the roof. Grab the lift cable and shimmy down and through the trap door. In the next room, use your lock picks to exit.



**3** There are now some cops to deal with and countless ways to do so, but after a few run-ins you find yourself in a plaza. The dead drop is behind the bushes in the opposite corner.



**4** Get the info from the dead drop. Continue up the street shooting out lights and avoiding guards as you go. Jump on the bin, double jump up on to the wall and you're in the next level.

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# IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE

**CD2/DVD Pub:** Codemasters **Dev:** Innerloop **Reviewed:** 127 (71%)

If our last *IGI 2: Covert Strike* demo left you uncertain about whether to put your hard cash down for a copy of the full game, let our second brand-new, exclusive single-player demo show you the way and the light. This time the demo contains The Weather Station mission that takes place much later on in the full game

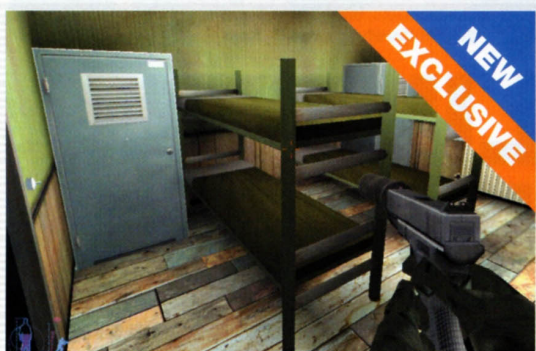


Kill from as far away as possible

and involves you stealing papers from a safe and locating a prototype microchip from a guarded 1950s weather station in the mountains.

You'll find that this demo is far more polished than the original one as it represents a build that is far closer to that of the final game. The AI is sharper and more challenging plus you get to play with loads of new weapons, including enemy ones such as grenades and the PSG-1SD sniper rifle, useful for taking out guards from distance, although you don't get nearly as many bullets as you'd like.

The snowy setting is also much more interesting as well as being visually impressive and you'll spend a lot of your time dodging and weaving through pine



Sadly you can't open lockers and rifle through people's things.

trees, swimming through icy water and trying to negotiate your way across treacherous paths with a blizzard blowing straight into your face. Just remember to keep low to the ground, use

your thermal imaging goggles as much as possible (they seem to work much better on this level) and watch out for grenades, alarms and sudden vertical drops in the scenery.

# RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

**CD2/DVD Pub:** Ubi Soft **Dev:** Ubi Soft

The limbless one is back and this time he's chasing down Andre, a red Lum gone bad in this third episode of the cutesy platformer. Again, another substantial demo this month, which contains three different levels of the full game to play through. Bad Sauce and Dangerous Game will help you get to grips with the basic control system, camera angle, jumping and some of Rayman's special items, such as gloves with special grippers for Tarzan style swinging.

Special Invaders is more of a flying shoot 'em up as Rayman and Globox pilot a ship around one of Andre's creations. Demo fact of the month is that John Leguizamo, who voices Sid the Sloth in *Ice Age*, also does the voice of alcoholic Globox in the game.



Smack those wooden piggies!

## DVD EXCLUSIVES

ONLY AVAILABLE ON PC ZONE'S DVD EDITION. TO SUBSCRIBE TURN TO PAGE 151

## BIKINI KARATE BABES

**Pub:** Creative Edge Studios  
**Dev:** Creative Edge Studios



Yes we hate nipple chaffing too. Underarm odour can be a killer.

If gaming diva Emily Bouffante's forays into cult film with *Pervirella* weren't enough to titillate breast-hungry senses, you're going to love what we've got on our cover discs this month. Quite aside from the Bits girls, the *Bikini Karate Babes* have made a number of appearances on US television and radio stations providing the ultimate fusion between gaming and outright pornography.

The demo includes an arcade mode where you can choose from one of three top-heavy girls on offer. You can either play the game in the arcade or spectacle mode where you choose the two girls you'd like to see decking each other with moves like Venus' flaming nipples or Aphrodite's open-breasted slap while you sit back and admire the quality of the animation.

## OTHER DEMOS ON THE CD/DVD

**UT2003 DE BONUS PACK, ANNO 1503, DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN, STAR WRAITH 3, THE WATCHMAKER, NASCAR 2003 AND GLADIATORS MULTIPLAYER DEMO.**

## OTHER DEMOS ON THE DVD

**AMERICAN CONQUEST, HOME PLANET, MECHWARRIORS 4: VENGEANCE, TIME OF DEFIANCE, EXTENDED PLAY, MOD WATCH AND ALL THE LATEST MOVIES AND PATCHES.**



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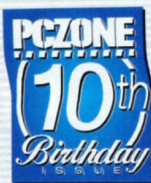
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# 10th ANNIVERSARY DISC

After 10 years in the business, we've given away some pretty awesome demos on our discs. This month, you get to relive more than 50 of the best

**IT CAN'T HAVE** escaped your notice that *PC ZONE* has reached its decade anniversary this issue. A whooping ten years of PC games coverage that has entertained, informed and sometimes titillated (if the sight of Charlie Brooker eating his own arse floats your boat).

To mark the event we are bringing you a DVD crammed full more than 50 of the best demos from the most influential games of the last 10 years (plus a few extras) from the likes of *Doom* all the way up to *Age Of Mythology*. Not only will you get to relive those great gaming moments of old but it's also a perfect snap-shot of a decade of top-class games development.

## DUNE II

■ Reviewed: Issue 1 | 89%

From the days when *ZONE* was but a newborn games magazine, here's the rolling demo of *Dune II* to stir up a few fond RTS memories. It contains cinematics of the three main houses in the throws of battle.

## X-WING

■ Reviewed: Issue 2 | 88%

If you wanted speedy space-based dog fighting then *X-Wing* was the game to be playing. A few steps ahead of *Wing Commander*, the game even allowed you to watch your greatest space triumphs over and over again in the film room.

## DOOM

■ Reviewed: Issue 13 | 96%

If the film world has *Citizen Kane* and the literary world has *The Lord Of The Rings*, then the defining title of the gaming world has to be *Doom*. No game has been more talked about, more reminisced about and more put on a pedestal than this one.

## SIM CITY 2000

■ Reviewed: Issue 13 | 92%

Nothing gave the *SimCity* series more life than when the top-down graphics of the original game turned into dinky Lego isometric buildings in *SimCity 2000*. Your cities became things of beauty, and the real world was just a vague memory.

## DESCENT

■ Reviewed: Issue 25 | 94%

Not only was *Descent* a 360 degree epic flight game set in alien-infested space mines, but it was also one of the few games that could actually make you feel nauseous without the presence of blood and guts. Prepare to feel the retching again.

## HERETIC

■ Reviewed: Issue 25 | 78%

*Heretic* utilised the *Doom* engine for a fantasy-based FPS where guns were replaced with weapons such as the green lightning firing gauntlets, and the classic morph ovum, which turned hideous monsters into chickens.



**No One lives Forever 2: One of the best single player FPSs out there.**

## RISE OF THE TRIAD

■ Reviewed: Issue 26 | 82%

Originally conceived as being *Wolfenstein 3D Part II*, *Rise Of The Triads* turned into a highly enjoyable FPS with some classic weapons such as the Hand of God and drunken missiles. It was also home to bounce pads long before *Quake*.

## COMMAND & CONQUER

■ Reviewed: Issue 28 | 95%

If only Westwood could have seen how successful its C&C franchise was going to become, because for most of the Western world the words *Command & Conquer* are synonymous with strategy. Not the first, but easily one of the best.

## THE NEED FOR SPEED

■ Reviewed: Issue 31 | 89%

Fast tracks and even faster cars, this was the game for the penis-substitute car lover. Featuring Lamborghinis, Ferraris and Porsches, you could race round a selection of wild tracks, and even choose what time of day to go driving. Class.

## WORMS

■ Reviewed: Issue 33 | 84%

Whoever came up with the idea of giving invertebrates squeaky voices and heavy weaponry deserves an Oscar, or perhaps a good kicking. Still, it's one of the best after-the-pub multiplayer games of all time.

## SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

■ Reviewed: Issue 34 | 60%

Many of us in the *ZONE* office have fond memories of the *Sensible Soccer* games and if you've sold off your Amiga on Ebay and can't remember the last time you used DOS, then put down PS2 *Pro Evo 2* and reminisce over a mature sporting classic.

## DUKE NUKEM 3D

Reviewed: Issue 40 | 93%

Away from cutesy platformers and into the real land of the Duke. Who didn't get a warm feeling from blowing away the naked female alien prisoners and stuffing dollars down strippers' tops? Shake it baby!

## QUAKE

■ Reviewed: Issue 43 | 96%

The game that spawned a million LAN parties. While *Doom* was the game for dualists, *Quake* was, and has been ever since, the game for huge multiplayer frag-fests with as many people as possible taking part in a good old-fashioned massacre.

## COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT

■ Reviewed: Issue 47 | 94%

Set in an alternate universe where Hitler had been killed off and Joe Stalin had come to power *Red Alert* took the gameplay of C&C and took it into detailed city environments. One of the ultimate 'time sponge' games.

## DIABLO

■ Reviewed: Issue 48 | 88%

Pick up sword, kill monster, get bigger sword, kill monster, get treasure, buy an even bigger sword. This was *Diablo* in a nutshell, but somehow the repetitive yet addictive gameplay struck a chord in many of us and sleepless nights abounded.

## CARMAGEDDON

■ Reviewed: Issue 50 | 95%

It was about as un-PC as you could get, but we loved it anyway. *Carmageddon* was brutal, took no prisoners and left no man, woman or OAP standing. Always a popular one with the *Daily Mail*.

## AGE OF EMPIRES

■ Reviewed: Issue 54 | 94%

Along with C&C the *Age Of* series has become one of the great gaming pillars of the RTS world. Most attractive to those who prefer fiddling about with their economy as well as building troops, it's still going strong six years later.

## SYSTEM SHOCK 2

■ Reviewed: Issue 62 | 95%

*System Shock 2* is undoubtedly one of the creepiest and most atmospheric RPGs of all time. It was involving, absorbing, mind-numbingly hard at times and pant-wettingly creepy at others – and guess what? Some four years later it's still amazing.

## STARCRAFT

■ Reviewed: Issue 64 | 88%

Even though *StarCraft* hasn't been as well favoured by Blizzard as the *Warcraft* and *Diablo* series have, it still remains one of the most beloved RTS games of all time. The fact people still play it in games tournaments is a testament to its legacy.

## GRIM FANDANGO

■ Reviewed: issue 71 | 90%

Ah, the heady days when LucasArts ruled the adventure game world. *Sam & Max Hit the Road*, *Day of the Tentacle*, *Monkey Island* and of course the fantastic *Grim Fandango* – the days were glorious back then.

## HALF-LIFE

■ Reviewed: Issue 71 | 95%

The sublime beauty, genuine atmosphere and compulsive story of *Half-Life* is still the gaming Holy Grail. Add in *Counter-Strike*, the most successful mod in the world, and you've got a game any developer would happily sell their soul for.

## ALIEN VS PREDATOR

■ Reviewed: Issue: 76 | 91%

When it comes to horror, the original *Aliens Vs Predator* was the one that really chewed up our senses and spat them out again, leaving us gibbering wrecks. Play as the Marine, the Alien or the Predator in our three demos of the best game to ever come out of two movie franchises.

## DUNGEON KEEPER II

■ Reviewed: Issue 79 | 94%

The ultimate good-to-be-bad game. In *DK2* you got to build and run your own dungeon full of hordes of evil minions and weird beasts. The game was full of great details and a devilish sense of humour. Bullfrog, you are sorely missed.

## UNREAL TOURNAMENT

■ Reviewed: Issue 81 | 90%

From its release *UT* proved it was a game that could go head-to-head



**Max Payne: Brought the feel of The Matrix to videogames.**





**SimCity 2000: boom town.**

with *Quake*'s multiplayer greatness. Brilliant levels, genuinely talented bots and, it has to be said, some of the best weaponry in an FPS to date.

### STAR WARS: TIE FIGHTER

■ Reviewed: Issue 81 | 90%

At last a chance to get away from those namby-pamby good guys and get yourself some action behind the flight stick of a TIE Fighter as a member of the Imperial Navy fighting to strengthen the Dark side. Heart-pounding action.

### HOMEWORLD

■ Reviewed: Issue 82 | 94%

One of the godfathers of RTS games, this space-based classic was not only the first fully 3D RTS, but one which managed to cram in sublime graphics, a smooth and flexible interface, and an addictive multiplayer element. Greatness indeed.

### QUAKE III ARENA

■ Reviewed: Issue 86 | 89%

The sheer joy of multiplayer *Quake* got its own game with *Arena*. Even though the *Quake* series was always best played against others, this title also gave you tournament mode where you could hone your skills against 30 different bots.

### HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

■ Reviewed: Issue 86 | 91%

Famously bugged but nevertheless a brilliant 3D tactical squad game set in World War II. You could play in either first-person or third-person mode as you controlled one of your characters, while the rest of your team carried out your orders.

### SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

■ Reviewed: Issue 89 | 93%

The first RTS game in a long time to genuinely try to push forward strategic gameplay, and one which practically created its own sub-RTS genre while it was doing it. Bloody and brilliant. It was a sheer joy to play then, and still is now.

### DEUS EX

■ Reviewed: Issue 93 | 94%

Sometimes a game comes along that makes gaming as a whole seem that little bit more cooler, and *Deus Ex* – or *Juice Ex* for American readers – was one of those games. Supreme espionage and stealth in *Matrix*-style long black coats and dark glasses.

### SUDDEN STRIKE

■ Reviewed: Issue 96 | 86%

*Sudden Strike* set its fast and furious RTS action in the maelstrom of WWII, and was a winner for it. Huge battles from the gates of Stalingrad to the sands of Egypt made it a hit all across Europe, and it's still a multiplayer favourite with many.

### MAX PAYNE

■ Reviewed: Issue 107 | 90%

*Max Payne* is the perfect example of style triumphing over substance, a rip-roaring ride through a visual roller-coaster that assaults the senses then covers up your bulging eyes with a nice pair of dark glasses.

### MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

■ Reviewed: Issue 112 | 94%

We waited years for a FPS that would finally topple *Half-Life*'s crown. At long last it came out of nowhere in the form of *Medal Of Honor*, a brilliantly designed WWII-inspired shooter with memorable levels and unparalleled atmosphere.

### WARRIOR KINGS

■ Reviewed: Issue 114 | 90%

*Warrior Kings* was a stunning and ambitious feat, and one that almost toppled the fantastic *Shogun* from our top RTS spot. Beautiful landscapes and engaging gameplay, as well as a commitment to hugely tactical 3D battles were the formula.

### JEDI KNIGHT 2

■ Reviewed: Issue 115 | 91%

It may not have really got started until you got the light sabre in your sticky hands, but nevertheless *Jedi Knight II* is still a true gaming great, and the first *Star Wars* game for five years to have received the hallowed classic award.

### MAFIA

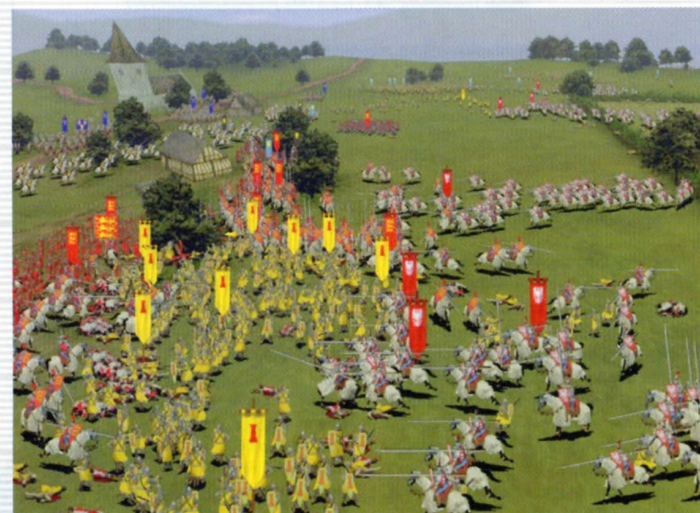
■ Reviewed: Issue 119 | 92%

The makers of *Hidden & Dangerous* didn't disappoint us with *Mafia*, a FPS/driving game crossbreed with an engaging Mafioso storyline, set in a beautifully depicted old New York-style city. Truly an offer you couldn't refuse.

### WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS

■ Reviewed: Issue 119 | 85%

The third instalment of the *Warcraft* series was well worth the wait. Upping the ante for RTS games in terms of multiplayer and storyline, it was polished and absorbing, if not much of a departure from the original.



**Medieval: Total War: The best RTS ever?**

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

■ Reviewed: Issue 120 | 90%

*Medieval* offers much of the same gameplay brilliance as its predecessor the ground-breaking *Shogun: Total War* did. This time the battles are bigger and there are many more diplomatic and military options for the cunning strategist.

### COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

■ Reviewed: Issue 120 | 85%

We wish the third one would bloody well hurry up and appear, but until then *Colin McRae Rally 2.0* still remains one of the best rally driving games around. Go on, bask in its fantastic graphics and overwhelming detail one more time.

### NOLF2

■ Reviewed: Issue 122 | 93%

*NOLF2* might have lost out to *Medal Of Honor* in our A-list due to its under-developed multiplayer mode, but as a single-player game it really is the business. Looks great, plays great and throws in a few genuine laughs as well.

### BATTLEFIELD 1942

■ Reviewed: Issue 121 | 78%

Although the single-player aspect of *Battlefield 1942* is substandard when compared to the multiplayer side, it still gives you a good introduction to the game, vehicles and weaponry. Have a taste of single-player tank action on the Tobruk map.

### AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

■ Reviewed: Issue 123 | 90%

The *Age Of* series came to full fruition in this 3D world saturated by the mythology of the Norse, the Egyptians and the Greeks. It had the strong gameplay you would expect of such a pedigree, and a surprisingly good storyline as well.

### NEOCRON

Reviewed: Issue 124 | 85%

One of the smaller MMORPGs out there, but *Neocron* packs a lot into its *Blade Runner* meets *Matrix*-style environment nevertheless. This offline demo allows you to explore a small part of the world and crush a few unfortunates.

### SPLINTER CELL

■ Reviewed: Issue 125 | 94%

Truly the best stealth game around on any platform at the moment, *Splinter Cell* manages to perfectly blend pace and structure with intense atmosphere and amazingly realistic soft-body physics. The result oozes style from every pixel.

### XMAS LEMMINGS

■ Reviewed: NA

Those suicidal lemmings are back for more kamikaze antics, and if you can't save them maybe Christmas can. Or maybe they'll just plunge to their deaths in a fiery vat of eggnog – the choice is yours.

### ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

■ Reviewed: NA

One of the most influential role-playing games of all time, *Ultima Underworld* helped kick-start 3D RPGs, as well as increasing the popularity of free-flowing gameplay and the use of non-player characters.

### WOLFENSTEIN 3D

■ Reviewed: NA

Without *Wolfenstein 3D* there may never have been a *Doom*, or at least we would have had to wait a lot longer for it. We bet once you hear the cries of "Spione!" echoing down the corridors it will all come flooding back.

### ELITE PLUS

■ Reviewed: NA

The VGA remake of David Braben's classic space trading sim *Elite*, *EP* featured new graphics and sound, but we still yearn for those days when watching a screensaver was considered entertainment.

### HELP!

■ Regrettably we are unable to provide support for these demos, as many of them were written for DOS and older versions of Windows 9x. If you do have problems, during installation or running, then please look at using compatibility mode to run programs designed for Windows 95, 98, ME and NT4 on Windows 2000 and XP the links below are to Microsoft documentation on compatibility mode and how to enable it on Windows 2000.

■ You may also need to look at the documentation for your hardware, especially for your soundcard, to ensure that it is using the correct settings for operation with pre-DirectX software.

■ Even if the demos do run under Windows 2000 and XP, you may experience graphical and sound glitches as the demos were written with much different hardware in mind. In these cases and wherever possible, we recommend you check the publisher's website for support details and to see if there are known issues with newer PCs.

**HOW TO:** Use Windows Program Compatibility Mode in Windows XP  
<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=k&en-us;292533>

**HOW TO:** Enable Application Compatibility-Mode Technology in Windows 2000 SP2 and SP3  
<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=k&en-us;Q279792>





# FIGHT CLUB

This month we've got a LAN extravaganza here in the Fight Club pages. And if you don't fancy any of these events, you can always play against us online

**SLIP ON YOUR BLACKEST T-SHIRT AND LOAD UP ON RED BULL – FIVE LUCKY READERS ARE OFF TO THE UK'S PREMIER LAN EVENT, i-15**

**WHILE TO** some people the concepts of sleep, nutrition and basic personal hygiene still hold a certain esoteric appeal, more and more UK gamers every day are shrugging off these shackles of traditional society and taking part in the strange ritual known as the LAN party. Designed to simulate the joys of online gaming without the associated comforts of lag, loneliness and anonymous abuse-hurling, LAN parties are getting bigger all the time.

The biggest and best LAN parties in the UK are the i-series, the next of which is coming up in March. And thanks to our friends at Multiplay UK, PC ZONE is giving five lucky readers free tickets to the event, each valued at £70.

The numerically correct i-15 takes place at Newbury Racecourse between March 14-16, kicking off at 9am on the Friday morning and running non-stop until 6pm Sunday. Entrance is normally £60,

## COMPETITION



Come along and join the fun at i-15. Should be blinding.

plus an £10 early entry fee for those who want to get settled in the night before (fee included in prize).

Major prize-winning tournaments will include a £2,000 prize-fund *Rainbow Six: Raven Shield* match and a £1,500 *IGI 2: Covert Strike* tourney. *Counter-Strike*, *Team Fortress Classic* and *Unreal Tournament 2003* will also carry prizes, and there will even be a chance to frag the PC ZONE team. You will of course need to bring a PC and a copy of whatever games you want to play. Future i-series tournaments are scheduled for June 27-29, August 22-25 and November 14-16.

**TO ENTER, LOG ONTO**

**pczone.co.uk/competitions/i-15**

**and answer the following question:**

Due to superstition, which number i-LAN event was missed out?

**Terms and conditions:** Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. This competition is open to UK residents only.

## FREE-FOR-ALL

**THURSDAY  
MAR 27**

6.30pm – 9.00pm

**Counter-Strike**

## HALL OF FAME

Earn five mentions and you'll have your name immortalised. Our one star player so far is...

**K.I.T**

## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Dave Woods	Kid Unknown
Richie Shoemaker	Zapatero
Martin Korda	Nameless One
Anthony Holden	Shokupan
Mark Hill	Leatherface
Paul Presley	IR Baboon
Lee Cocker	Viper
Phil Clark	ShitKicker
Danny King-Smith	Ronin
Colin Mackleworth	M.A.C.H.I.N.E.
Jamie Malcolm	BraveArt

## FREE-FOR-ALL CONNECTION DETAILS

Connecting to our server is simple. And to make things easier, we've given the it a permanent home. To hook up from within the game, open the *Half-Life* console and type **password pczone** and then press enter. After this type **connect pczone2.jolt.co.uk** and press enter. You'll be taken right there. You can also add the server to popular game browsers such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy 3D by entering **pczone2.jolt.co.uk** where you would normally provide an IP address. Check our forum ([www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk)) for any information updates.

## PC ZONE GAME SERVERS POWERED BY JOLT.CO.UK

**OUR SERVERS ARE OPEN 24/7 AND FREE OF CHARGE. WHY PLAY ANYWHERE ELSE?**

We've switched our game servers to the ultra-fast Jolt service, which means lag should now be a thing of the past. We've also changed the way you find them, and from now on we'll refer to them by their name rather than by their address. The easiest way to connect is to load the game you wish to

play, go to the multiplayer connection screen, and instead of typing in an IP address, type in the name of the server from the list below. They can also be accessed from a server browser such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy. Remember to use the password below, which is updated each month.

TFC Public Server #1 – [24hr 2fort]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27025](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27025)  
TFC Public Server #2 – [24hr Badlands]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27035](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27035)

Natural Selection #1 – [1.04]: [pczone.jolt.co.uk:27020](http://pczone.jolt.co.uk:27020)  
Natural Selection #2 – [1.04]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27020](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27020)

Quake III: [QIII Fortress]: [pczone.jolt.co.uk:27960](http://pczone.jolt.co.uk:27960)

Unreal Tournament 2003 [Team DM]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:7777](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:7777)

CS Public Server #1 [All maps]: [pczone.jolt.co.uk:27015](http://pczone.jolt.co.uk:27015)  
CS Public Server #2 – [Dusty]: [pczone.jolt.co.uk:27025](http://pczone.jolt.co.uk:27025)  
CS Public Server #3 – [Custom Maps]: [pczone.jolt.co.uk:27035](http://pczone.jolt.co.uk:27035)

Wolfenstein – [1.33]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27960](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27960)

**PASSWORD: exclusive**

## LAN ROVER

**LAN LORD STEVE 'SCALPER' RANDALL KNOWS WHERE THE PARTY'S AT**

■ There's space for 16 players at the Inchture Village Hall, Scotland for a one day event on March 22 from 0900 – 1700. The cost is £15.00 with more details available from [www.vulcan25.tk](http://www.vulcan25.tk).  
■ My next GGLan is on March 22-23 in Mile End, London. Gainward, EA, CDV and Microsoft all gave away prizes at my last event, and expect this one to be well sponsored too. It costs £20.00 and should be great fun. For more details visit [www.gglan.co.uk](http://www.gglan.co.uk).

■ The people at [www.biggame.org](http://www.biggame.org) can give you info about their 100 player event in Wildern School, Southampton. It costs £20 and takes place from April 18-20.  
■ The Lanarchy organisers are looking for your support on March 15-16 as they have moved out of the sixth form centre and into the sports hall for Lanarchy 8. This will allow them space for 80 players instead of the usual 36. Details are available from [www.lanarchy.co.uk](http://www.lanarchy.co.uk), and the cost is £25.00.

■ [www.centralanuk.co.uk](http://www.centralanuk.co.uk) have finally given Stoke-on-Trent its first regular event on the April 4-6. Forty four gamers will meet at the Bagnall Village Hall, Staffordshire Moorlands. If you want to join them it will cost £20.00.  
■ HGLan will be holding a three-day event from April 18-20. Location to be confirmed. For details visit [www.hglan.co.uk](http://www.hglan.co.uk).



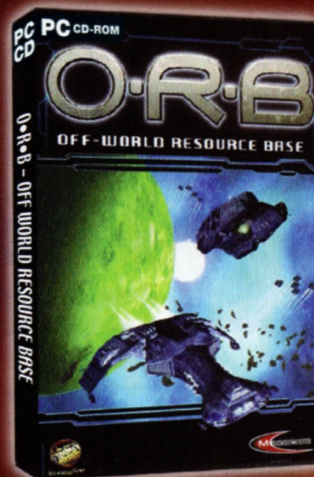
# G.I. COMBAT

## EPISODE 1: BATTLE OF NORMANDY

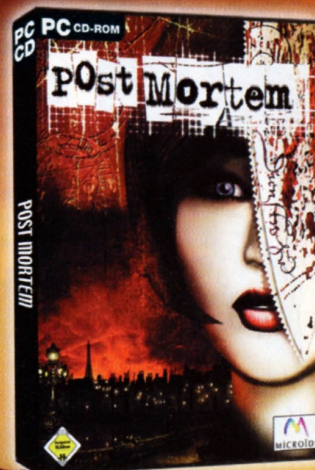
**7TH MARCH 2003**

Adrenaline Vault, June 2002  
*"The attention to detail is absolutely staggering.  
 Wargamers will find a ton to love..."*

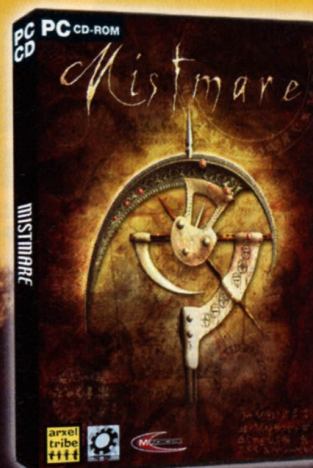
Also Available  
 March 7th 2003



PC Zone, March 2003  
*"Entertaining space RTS"*



PC Gamer, January 2003  
*"There's a genuinely entertaining,  
 very beautiful, well made game  
 lurking in there."*



PC Format, January 2003  
*"Mistmare seems to be an  
 extraordinarily immersive and  
 completely believable game world."*



FREEDOM  
 GAMES







# MAILBOX

Everybody needs a good rant every now and again, and we're here to listen...

HOLDING COURT Dave Woods



## SYCOPHANT

I wonder if it's because PC ZONE is the oldest PC games magazine that it's had the longest time to fall under the spell of Peter Molyneux. I'm talking about Martin Korda's preview of *Black & White 2*, the sequel to one of the most anticipated and underwhelming games I've ever had the misfortune to play. It's not uncommon for previews in PCZ to show great enthusiasm for a product, or high hopes that it will be a great piece of software, but this article had

made up its mind before it went through the doors at Black & White Studios, and essentially all there was left to be done was to play the sycophant.

OK, it looks amazing, but, so did the original, which, apart from great looks and an excellent user interface, was a dull and repetitive affair. Since PCZ instigated the harsh marking system, a good long



Red Faction: Nice ideas, shame about the execution.

while ago now, the reviews have been more accurate than ever and you provide far and away the most trustworthy guide. But I don't think I'll trust any review you give of *Black & White 2*. I won't trust you to approach it with an open mind, and I won't trust you to point out the faults if and when you find them.

Robin Cannon

Sorry to be pedantic but it seems to me you're the one who's made his mind up prematurely. Martin is very hopeful that the sequel is going to be brilliant. The difference is, he's played it, you're basing your critique on the flaws in the first game, flaws that Peter Molyneux has already acknowledged.

## xXx OFF

Richard Bennett (Mailbox PCZ 125) really hasn't been paying attention to action films over the last 30 years or so, has he? Hollywood has always put spectacle before story. Do you really think *Live And Let Die* was influenced by *Pong*? How many directors are looking at games saying "I wish my films were more like this?" Not nearly as

many as the games producers looking at xXx and *Die Another Day* with envious eyes...

Peter Darby

## WHY OH WHY?

Why on earth do all modern games come in DVD cases? What is it with publishers? I've got a CD rack but I can't put the new games in it because they all come in DVD boxes. Why can't games come in CD cases?

Andy Swinscoe

And breath. Feeling better?

## SEEING RED ONLINE

Why do you never write anything about *Red Faction* online? I bought it when it was released, played the single-player game and enjoyed it, but then a friend asked if I'd played it online. That was the start of a six-month addiction, during which I played every day. I've spoken to a few friends and none of them have played it online. Why?

Stephen Attaway

I'm sorry, did you say you'd bought *Red Faction*? And you



You can order *Star Wraith 3* online for US\$12.95 and get the first two games thrown in free.

## GOT SOMETHING YOU NEED TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST? WRITE TO...

MAILBOX, PC ZONE, 30 CLEVELAND ST, LONDON W1T 4JD, OR EMAIL LETTERS@PCZONE.CO.UK

WIN!  
A TOP  
SOUND  
CARD

The Letter of the Month wins a spanking new soundcard courtesy of the lovely people at Creative Labs. The Audigy 2 Platinum has been firmly ensconced in our Buyer's Guide since its release and is the best gaming card you can currently buy.





## "His forearms are each thicker than my neck, maybe even the width of my whole head"

ED SHAZBUT MARVELLING AT THE SIZE OF OUR MARTIN

know a friend that's got a copy as well? That's not possible, surely...

### LAST CHANCE SALOON

You're my last hope in this cruel, dark world. I'm desperately trying to find a game that is like an up-to-date version of *Freespace 2*. I know it's asking the impossible, as game developers seem to only bother in either making:

1. Shoot 'em ups
2. Strategy
3. Another *Sims* add-on

I don't want or care about these type of games, I'm sick to death of them. I want another *Freespace 2* or another *Tie Fighter*. Please can you tell me or give me a few suggestions of any games that might match up to these great games. (Not *Edge Of Chaos*, which did nothing for me, or *Homeworld*, which may well be a great game, but not what I'm looking for.)

Vas

Let me point you in the direction of Richie Shoemaker, fellow fan of *Freespace 2*, for some brilliant advice. "Have you tried *StarLancer*? It's not brilliant but it's still a bloody good space combat game. Or, if you want to get your hands on something now, right away, try logging on to [www.starwraith.com](http://www.starwraith.com) and download the latest version of the trilogy."

### SHEENA

I read your article on voiceovers in games with horror. How could you forget about the lovely voice of Sheena Easton as the gorgeous Annah in *Planescape: Torment*? The best PC game of all time in my book. How about a picture of Sheena to make up for it?

Roy MacDonald

Your wish is my command.

### OVERDOSE

How to tell if a PC game is brilliant or rubbish: it doesn't matter how excellent the graphics are or how in-depth



**Sheena - Scotland's most famous export and ex-lover of the symbol formerly known as PORG.**

the gameplay is as long as it has a major effect on the way you think. Take *GTA III* for example. I was walking along a street during the period I was playing it, and as I did so I was thinking about all the different cars I wanted to steal and wondering where all the jumps were so I could get my Insane Stunt Bonus with my flashy new

trying to find the quietest route to the kitchen and wondering where I'd put my thermal. Also having played the demo for *Lula 3D* I found myself sitting and imagining... You get the picture.

Kevin Mackay

I once played *Mr Driller* for so long that I thought some of the text in Word was going to collapse onto my cursor.

### MAN MOUNTAIN

I know you've made comments (subtle and otherwise) about the size of Martin Korda but nothing prepared me for the shock when I turned to page 60 in issue 125. Whether or not that picture had been there for months I don't know, but this was the first time I'd noticed it.

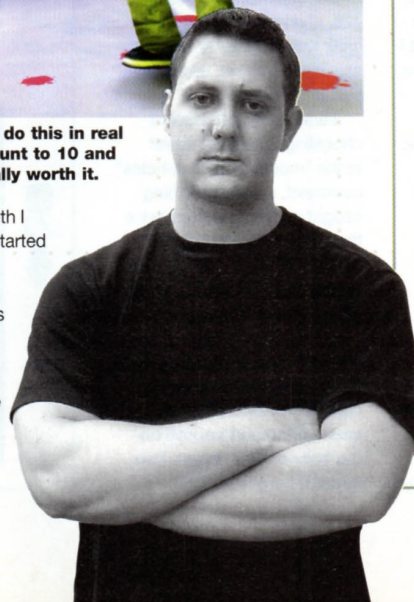
I am referring, of course, to Martin Korda's arms. What the bloody hell does he eat? His forearms are each thicker than my neck, maybe even the



**If you get the urge to do this in real life then just stop, count to 10 and ask yourself if it's really worth it.**

Porsche. Then last month I bought *PC ZONE* and started playing the demo for *Splinter Cell*. Having completed it 45 minutes later I found myself sneaking downstairs

**Korda: Arms the size of Geoff Cape. And if you stop buying ZONE he'll rip your lungs out.**



## READER REVIEWS

STAR  
REVIEW

### FANCY A CAREER WRITING FOR A GAMES MAG? WELL PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT...

We want reviews of the games you love or the ones you hate. Each one should be between 50 and 350 words and come with a score out of 100. The best one wins a game from the current charts. Send your review to the standard Mailbox address (see boxout) and remember to include your name, address and telephone number.

### UNREAL 2

ISSUE 126 - SCORE: 94%

**We said...** "There is no doubting the greatness of *Unreal II*, but that's not to say it's perfect... There's a general feeling that Legend has kept it as simple as they could in order to satisfy the target audience."



Bought your magazine, read your review of *Unreal II*, went to the bank the next day and bought myself a copy of the game. Do I agree with what you said? Pretty much, although I wouldn't have given the game as high a score.

Graphically it can't be faulted. The game is the best looking bit of software I've ever used and justifies the mountain of money I spent on my new ATI 9700 graphics card. Gameplay is a bit tired but no better or worse than any of the other big name shooters of the past year, so I don't think the game can be faulted there.

The lack of multiplayer is my biggest problem with *Unreal II*. I know that I could go and buy *Unreal Tournament 2003*, which is the online sibling, but why should I have to pay twice for what is essentially the same product. I finished *Unreal II* after about 12 hours of playing and although I enjoyed it, I'm now left with something I'm probably not going to play again for another year. If multiplayer was included I could get my money's worth by beating noobies into submission on the Internet.

Still, overall, if you're an FPS fan then this is definitely worth buying. I don't think it's the best shooter (that accolade still goes to *Half-Life* IMHO) but you can't call yourself a shooter fan without playing the thing of beauty that is *Unreal II*.

Stewart Holmes  
**VERDICT: 91%**





The stealth action is over – *Splinter Cell* is now in the shops.

width of my whole head. I'd sure like to know his exercise routine, and whether he sleeps in a grow bag.

Ed Shazbut

Korda is huge and regularly clocks the machines at the local gym. He doesn't sleep in a grow bag – the secret to his success rhymes with haemorrhoids if you're interested, but are far less itchy.

## NATURAL BORN KILLERS

I think the people who give games ratings are far too serious about their job. Games like the GTA series can't be played by kids whose parents only let them play 15 certificates. OK, so maybe *Medal Of Honor*, *Battlefield 1942* and many other good games are 15s but there are some lovely games that are

18s such as *Soldier Of Fortune II: Double Helix*. The raters only have one good excuse for making them 18s, which is not encouraging young children to kill each other. But can you imagine a six-year old child shooting a Nazi? Anyway, if a war breaks out we're going to see it all for real, so all games do is prepare us for the truth. See my idea doesn't sound so stupid now I've given you some good evidence.

James Loose

I never doubted you for a second. It's the first time I've ever heard *Soldier Of Fortune II* being described as "lovely" though.

## IT'S TIME TO BELIEVE THE HYPE

So *Splinter Cell* got 94 per cent in *PC ZONE*? At first I thought, hmmm, maybe Tom Clancy has been bribing certain people with the name Anthony, so I had to check out the hype. WOW is the only word for this game. The scale of things that I haven't seen before is massive, the shadows are the most accurate I've ever seen, the controlling of Fisher is fantastic (coolest move being the split jump). I love it when he whips out his gun and it goes to his viewpoint and I'm especially impressed with the forced interrogations, human shield, hostage taking, the optical cable and that's only in the demo. Need I say any more? OK, if you're only going to buy one game this year, buy *Splinter Cell* – just make sure your hardware can cope.

Stuart 'airjammer' Holroyd

By the time you read this letter the game should actually be on sale. What are you waiting for?

## FLYING SOLO

Thanks for an excellent magazine, packed with bags of info and excellent reviews and previews. My only real complaint is that most of the demos on your discs are multiplayer only. Is there a good reason for this?

Barry Holt

Multiplayer games usually ship with a multiplayer demo first (like *Vietcong*) because it's a lot easier to create. You don't have to worry about AI, which is usually being tweaked right up to release, but I'd dispute that most of the demos on our discs are multiplayer.

## SPOT SADDAM

I just finished reading your review of *SimCity 4* in issue 125, and I nearly fell off my chair with laughter at what I saw in the "missed opportunity" part of the article.

I was reading through it chuckling quietly to myself at the "modern-day hell-holes" comment, when something caught my eye. I looked twice then moved the magazine closer – what did I see in the inset picture? Saddam himself. What was he doing there?

Simon Pendar-Hughes

It's part of an initiative to draw him into the arms of global capitalism. He's also been seen suited and booted on the floor of Wall Street. You heard it here first. [X]

## READER REVIEWS

### HALF-LIFE

ISSUE 71 – MULTIPLAYER SCORE: 95%

**We said...** "What haven't we said about this game? Still unsurpassed for many, Steve Hill used the words 'sensational' and 'sick and twisted' in his review but he's always been a master of understatement."



*Half-Life*, this is your life... You were born in the year 1998 and were an intelligent child even in those days. When sent to school you were a long way ahead of the other pupils and soon became head of the class especially in FPS studies, receiving high marks from every teacher you came into contact with.

After leaving Sierra College to get a full time job pointing out the weaknesses in every other FPS, *Half-Life* was soon married to the extremely popular *Counter-Strike* and started the messy job of procreating. First out of the traps was *Opposing Force* (who had very different views to his parents) and the slightly underachieving *Blue Shift* (who could never quite live up to his parent's legacy).

Strange anthropomorphising aside this is still the finest bloody shooter in the known universe. If you haven't got it yet you deserve to be crucified, talking of which there's a rumour going round that Jesus quick saved just before he was put on the cross. So buy it now or God himself shall strike thee down!

Alfie Kenward

VERDICT: 99.995%



## APOLOGY

And it seems we owe an apology to Scott Holmes for ripping into him last month for suggesting that Ken and Barbie should feature in our Good Cop, Bad Cop column. We said witheringly: "She might be bad, but we don't think she's ever been a cop". Scott countered with this photographic evidence. We humbly apologise.





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# THE PCZONE A-LIST

## SHOOTERS

### UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING



**NEW ENTRY** There is little that can compare with the sublime beauty of *Unreal II*. The graphics are jaw-dropping, and the absolute pinnacle of what every FPS in the last year has been aiming for but never quite achieved. The arsenal of weaponry at your disposal is imaginative and satisfying to wield, while the sound effects, music and even the voice acting all exude quality.

**PUB** Atari **DEV** Legend Entertainment

PCZ ISSUE 126



#### MEDAL OF HONOR

It's taken years but finally there's a shooter worthy of toppling *Half-Life*. Brilliant level design, surprisingly good AI, an unparalleled sense of atmosphere and intensity, not to mention beautifully scripted scenes.

**PUB** EA **DEV** 2015

PCZ ISSUE 112



#### NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

Style, stealth and magnificent set-pieces are the order of the day in this excellent spy sequel. It looks brilliant, it's well designed and genuinely funny – and it doesn't treat you like an idiot.

**PUB** Black Label Games **DEV** Monolith

PCZ ISSUE 122



#### HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Unchallenged for three years, *Half-Life* redefined its genre with a cracking atmosphere and a compelling plot. It now comes bundled with the excellent *Opposing Force* add-on pack and the world's favourite mod, *Counter-Strike*.

**PUB** Vivendi **DEV** Valve Software

PCZ ISSUE 71



#### UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

Not a million miles away from the last *UT* title, *UT2003* does however make leaps and bounds graphically. With finely balanced weapons, smart bots and diverse maps it's the reigning king of speed fragging.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Digital Extremes

PCZ ISSUE 122



#### MAFIA

From the makers of *Hidden & Dangerous* and just as compelling, this game borrows from every great gangster film ever made. Tense missions, superb atmosphere and great AI – it's a classic in every respect. Badabing!

**PUB** Take 2 **DEV** Illusion

PCZ ISSUE 119



#### JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

The first *Star Wars* game to be awarded a *PC ZONE* Classic award since the original *Jedi Knight* back in 1997. This is more than just a simple FPS, it's frustrating, rewarding and extremely good fun. A new hope has come.

**PUB** Activision **DEV** Raven

PCZ ISSUE 115



#### SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II

The bloodiest game in the world is back, but this time there's a brilliant game covering beneath the carnage. Sublime AI is the chief culprit and if you can stomach the violence this is a must buy.

**PUB** Activision **DEV** Raven

PCZ ISSUE 118



#### ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

If we rated games on atmosphere and tension *AvP2* would've been the highest-scoring game ever. The multiplayer game and 3D engine brought the score down, but for scares nothing can touch this three-way fragfest.

**PUB** Vivendi **DEV** Monolith

PCZ ISSUE 110



#### BATTLEFIELD 1942

Even though it features a disappointing and heavily bugged single-player campaign, *Battlefield* is one of the most compelling team-based multiplayer games ever. A must have for any online shooter fan.

**PUB** EA **DEV** Digital Illusions

PCZ ISSUE 121

## STRATEGY

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR



A sequel to the stunning *Shogun: Total War* (now available on budget), *Medieval* offers everything its predecessor did and a whole lot more. Adding to the massive 3D battles and turn-based *Risk*-style strategy map are a multitude of new options, both diplomatic and military. Breathtaking in every way, strategy games just don't come any better than this.

**PUB** Activision

**DEV** Creative Assembly

PCZ ISSUE 120



#### AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

The *Age Of* series goes 3D in Ensemble Studios' best strategy outing to date. Great gameplay, superb attention to detail throughout and a strong storyline give this an unparalleled sense of atmosphere, plus it includes a decent map editor.

**PUB** Microsoft **DEV** Ensemble Studios

PCZ ISSUE 123



#### WARRIOR KINGS

A visually stunning and hugely ambitious RTS that melds the strategic diversity of *Battle Realms* with the huge 3D rolling landscapes of *Shogun*. With a compelling story to boot, no strategy fan should be without a copy.

**PUB** Microids **DEV** Black Cactus

PCZ ISSUE 114



#### COMMANDOS 2

There have been a few imitators of the squad-based strategy of *Commandos* but none have come close to this sequel. If, like us, you loved the first game, you'll love this massive, preposterously detailed follow-up even more.

**PUB** Eidos **DEV** Pyro Studio

PCZ ISSUE 108



#### COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS

There are 8,000 troops at your disposal in this historically accurate RTS. Smooth unit movement, a 3D landscape with real physics modelling and great graphics and sound make it truly absorbing. An essential purchase.

**PUB** CDV **DEV** GSC Gameworld

PCZ ISSUE 101



#### Z: STEEL SOLDIERS

*Z* will re-ignite your passion for strategy games with its fast-paced in-ner-face action that allows you to get down and dirty from the off. The AI is superb and, as it's entirely mouse-driven, it's simple and easy to get into.

**PUB** EON **DEV** Bitmap Brothers

PCZ ISSUE 101



#### ETHERLORDS

This unexpected gem might just be good enough to convert those who immediately associate 'turn-based' with the word 'geek'. The visuals and sound are stunning, the tactical variety truly staggering – fantastic stuff.

**PUB** JoWood **DEV** Nival Interactive

PCZ ISSUE 112



#### WARCRAFT III

While not a huge departure from the original, *Warcraft III* is an extremely enjoyable and polished package. The storyline is brilliant and the multiplayer action dangerously addictive. Simple, solid entertainment.

**PUB** VU Games **DEV** Blizzard

PCZ ISSUE 119



#### BATTLE REALMS

Emerging from the quagmire of all too similar RTS games this is a genuinely ground-breaking strategy game. It does have its flaws which include a tedious plot, but the great use of sound, visuals and gameplay shine through.

**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** Liquid Entertainment

PCZ ISSUE 111



#### SUDDEN STRIKE

*Sudden Strike* mixes WWII action with classic RTS gameplay in order to create a compelling strategy title. Its large-scale battles, huge selection of units and superb interface make it a must for RTS fans.

**PUB** CDV **DEV** Fireglow

PCZ ISSUE 96



Welcome to the **PC ZONE A-List**, the definitive buyer's guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages aren't just good, they're the best of the best in their respective genres, and our list is continually updated to show how each game stands in relation to its peers. Get in.

## ◀ ROLE-PLAYING GAMES ▶

### DEUS EX



Warren Spector is one of the true visionaries of the computer game medium, and this is his magnum opus. Combining the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief*, *Deus Ex* is an RPG of complex beauty and a true revolution in computer gaming. The fascinating sci-fi plot and amazing attention to detail, combined with unparalleled player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is a landmark in gaming.

PUB Eidos DEV Ion Storm

PCZ ISSUE 93

## ◀ ACTION/ADVENTURE ▶

### SPLINTER CELL

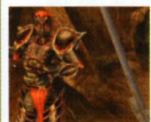


At long last we've got a new king of the action adventures with the Tom Clancy influenced *Splinter Cell*, and a new crown prince of stealth in the form of the über flexible Sam Fisher. *Splinter Cell* features the perfect blend of action, structure and pace, combined with some of the best visuals and set pieces around. No self-respecting gamer should miss out on this.

PUB Ubi Soft

DEV Ubi Soft Montreal

PCZ ISSUE 125

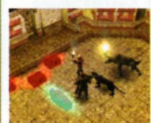


#### THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

One of the most impressive RPGs we've seen in years. A massively open-ended world full of beautiful visuals, superb depth of gameplay and innovative character development make this a classic that will keep you totally absorbed.

PUB Ubi Soft DEV Bethesda Softworks

PCZ ISSUE 117



#### NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

The makers of the epic *Baldur's Gate* series prove they are still a leading force in the world of RPGs with this glorious hardcore 3D adventure. It features great single and multiplayer options, along with a very accessible toolkit.

PUB Infogrames DEV Bioware

PCZ ISSUE 118



#### PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

An incredible game from Black Isle, using the *Baldur's Gate* engine. With a compelling story, well-scripted dialogue and the best character development we've seen in any game of its kind, this is a dark, adult scorch of an RPG.

PUB Interplay DEV Black Isle Studio

PCZ ISSUE 87



#### DUNGEON SIEGE

Graphically brilliant, massively enjoyable and highly immersive, *Dungeon Siege* is one of the best RPGs to date and only misses out on a Classic because of the shortcomings in the narrative.

PUB Microsoft DEV Gas Powered Games

PCZ ISSUE 115



#### SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Definitely one of the most original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it with the lights off if you're hard enough.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games

PCZ ISSUE 80



#### BALDUR'S GATE II

The original *Baldur's Gate* was hailed as one of the best story-driven role-playing games ever. The sequel isn't vastly different, but it's bigger, better and still extremely addictive. An essential for anyone interested in PC role-playing.

PUB Interplay DEV Bioware

PCZ ISSUE 96



#### DIVINE DIVINITY

This epic RPG contains the action of *Diablo II* combined with the storyline of the *Baldur's Gate* series, not to mention about 200 hours of gameplay in a huge fantasy world. The name may be a bit silly, but the gameplay certainly isn't.

PUB CDV DEV Larian Studios

PCZ ISSUE 121



#### FREEDOM FORCE

Control your own group of superheroes in this immersive and fully destructible comic book world. It may not be the most sophisticated and beady of RPGs, but *Freedom Force* is unadulterated bubble-gum fun at its best.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games

PCZ ISSUE 115



#### ARX FATALIS

This is a graphically beautiful role-playing game with more than a few hints of *Ultima Underworld*. Its hugely detailed and realistic environment made this a PC ZONE Essential.

PUB VU Games DEV Monolith

PCZ ISSUE 122



#### GRIM FANDANGO

If you've followed LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must. The scripting is impeccable, while sublime graphics and brilliant humour ensure it's top of its genre.

PUB Activision DEV LucasArts

PCZ ISSUE 71



#### SILENT HILL 2: DIRECTOR'S CUT

**NEW ENTRY** Survival horror games have truly come of age with this superbly creepy and atmospheric offering from Japan. From the lovingly-smeared blood and grime to the terrifying use of ambient sound, it's a class act.

PUB Konami DEV Konami

PCZ ISSUE 126



#### SOUL REAVER 2

While this latest episode in the saga of Raziel takes few risks with the action/adventure formula, it's a consummately constructed example of the genre, with a compelling storyline, satisfying combat and excellent puzzle dynamics.

PUB Eidos DEV Crystal Dynamics

PCZ ISSUE 111



#### DISCWORLD NOIR

Although the point-and-click adventure game is dying, *Discworld Noir* is still very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and all the better for it in our opinion.

PUB Infogrames DEV Perfect Entertainment

PCZ ISSUE 79



#### THE THING

Drawing on some brilliant raw material from John Carpenter's classic horror movie, this survival action horror picks up the story where the film left off. It's one of the best film spin-offs around, with tense atmosphere and good gameplay.

PUB Black Label Games DEV Computer Artworks

PCZ ISSUE 121



#### PRISONER OF WAR

One of the most original games available with a light-hearted setting and an atmospheric soundtrack, which makes it more of an adventure than an action title. *POW* makes a refreshing change from the usual mass slaughter fare.

PUB Codemasters DEV Wide Games

PCZ ISSUE 121



#### HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

The revamped *Hitman* engine is nothing short of breathtaking, blessing the sequel with gorgeous graphics that fit well with the refined controls and superbly realistic AI. *Hitman 2* is solid and enjoyable with a great sense of gameplay freedom.

PUB Eidos DEV IO

PCZ ISSUE 121



#### SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

Anyone who doesn't mind being splattered with the kind of gore rarely seen outside *Soldier Of Fortune* will find much to like in *Severance*. But it stands out from the usual hack 'n' slasher with its amazing engine and combo system.

PUB Codemasters DEV Rebel Act Studios

PCZ ISSUE 98



#### PROJECT EDEN

Giving you control of four variously skilled operatives in a nightmarish future metropolis, *Eden* is at once predictable and innovative. The combat and AI may be dull, but the varied puzzles and raft of cool gadgetry make up for it.

PUB Eidos DEV Core Design

PCZ ISSUE 107



## ◀ GOD GAMES ▶

# BLACK & WHITE



Although it had its critics we still stand by our original verdict. Peter Molyneux's vision is pure and the design of the game both breaks boundaries and serves as a blueprint for the future. The add-on *Creature Isle* is also available, which cuts down on micro-management and lets you guide your creature through a variety of mini-games. Overall we think it's pure genius in a box.

**PUB EA DEV** Lionhead Studios  
**PCZ ISSUE 100**



## CIVILIZATION III

*Civilization III* sticks to the same compulsive gameplay that made the first two games so popular. Die-hard *Civ* fans will relish the improved visuals and animation, while the new user-friendly interface makes the game accessible to the first-timer. Brings to mind the maxim 'if it ain't broke...'

**PUB Infogrames DEV** Firaxis Games  
**PCZ ISSUE 111**



## THE SIMS

Revolutionary at birth, the concept has since been diluted through numerous add-ons and an unhealthy long stay in the charts. It's now little more than a cash cow for Electronic Arts, but you can't help but admire the strength of community and the fact that it's still selling by the bucketload.

**PUB EA DEV** Maxis/EA  
**PCZ ISSUE 87**



## CAESAR III

Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens by balancing their work, health and entertainment needs. So what? So it's probably one of the most utterly absorbing and addictive god sims in existence. Hail Caesar.

**PUB VU Games DEV** Impressions  
**PCZ ISSUE 70**



## EMPEROR: RISE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

This intricate game comes from the same stable as *Zeus* and *Caesar* – and they know a thing or two about city building. There's a massive amount of gameplay and more than 50 missions spanning seven historical campaigns. As well as the economic considerations, you'll have to follow feng shui and the Chinese zodiac.

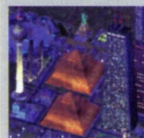
**PUB VU Games DEV** Breakaway Games  
**PCZ ISSUE 121**



## ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2

As utterly absorbing as its predecessor, *RollerCoaster Tycoon 2* once again revolves around designing and managing your own theme park. This version also allows you to design individual rides as well as including a handful of real-life coasters. Detailed and addictive.

**PUB Infogrames DEV** Chris Sawyer  
**PCZ ISSUE 123**



## SIMCITY 4

The latest outing of the best-selling city building sim goes 3D. Unfortunately there are no huge leaps forwards in gameplay, but there are plenty of features such as regional cities, imported characters from *The Sims* and a terrain editor to keep you occupied.

**PUB EA DEV** Maxis  
**PCZ ISSUE 125**



## MONOPOLY TYCOON

This mixture of the classic board game and a *Theme Park/SimCity*-style building sim is an admirable attempt at something a little different. Played in real-time, the aim is to make as much money as possible. Great fun for a while, but it quickly becomes repetitive.

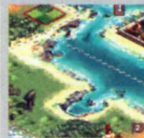
**PUB Infogrames DEV** Deep Red  
**PCZ ISSUE 110**



## DUNGEON KEEPER 2

The ultimate 'it's good to be bad' game, *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea and *DK2* takes the essence and humour of the original, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and adds a myriad of new features that build wisely on the original concept.

**PUB EA DEV** Bullfrog  
**PCZ ISSUE 79**



## CALL TO POWER II

It might not have the official endorsement, but *Call To Power II* is a spiritual successor to one of the greatest strategy games of all time, *Civilization II*. The gameplay is familiar but every element has been polished and the result is a hugely challenging and rewarding experience. It's still well worth seeking out.

**PUB Activision DEV** Activision  
**PCZ ISSUE 98**

## ◀ ONLINE ▶

# EVERQUEST



*EverQuest* keeps going from strength to strength and now has a total of four expansion packs. The latest, *Planes Of Power* (see page 72 for our full review), provides a multitude of simplifications to help newcomers, while adding lots of new worlds for high-level characters to explore. It's a truly beautiful and captivating game that has claimed the souls of thousands of people the world over.

**PUB Ubi Soft DEV** Verant  
**PCZ ISSUE 117**



## NEOCRON

It's a much smaller world than the epic *EverQuest*, but there's a lot crammed into this *Matrix* meets *Blade Runner*-style MMORPG. The atmosphere is fresh, exciting and extremely engrossing. We see big things ahead for *Neocron*.

**PUB CDV DEV** Reaktor  
**PCZ ISSUE 124**



## ANARCHY ONLINE

A beautiful MMORPG with detailed environments and a huge selection of armour and weapons, which all add up to make an immersive title. Many of the bugs have been ironed out and the latest update offers a slick gaming experience.

**PUB Funcom DEV** Funcom  
**PCZ ISSUE 114**



## ASHERON'S CALL II

**NEW ENTRY** One of the smoothest, most graphically lush MMORPGs around, *ACII* is also extremely easy to pick up. It's still in need of work but hopefully Turbine will be providing the community with regular updates.

**PUB Microsoft DEV** Turbine Entertainment  
**PCZ ISSUE 126**



## DARK AGE OF CAMELOT

With some of the best graphics seen in an MMORPG, *Dark Age Of Camelot* creates an atmospheric, engaging and open-ended world. The scale of battles alone should ensure it remains popular for quite a while.

**PUB Koch Media DEV** Mythic Entertainment  
**PCZ ISSUE 116**

## ◀ DRIVING GAMES ▶

# GRAND THEFT AUTO III



It may have taken its time getting onto the PC, but *Grand Theft Auto III* was definitely worth the wait. Offering you both traditional linear missions and a wonderfully freeform world ripe for exploring, the game boasts stunning graphics and superb attention to detail. It's a great spin on both the driving and shooting genres and we can assure you that you'll love this noisy orgy of violence and speed. Crime really does pay.

**PUB Take 2 DEV** Rockstar  
**PCZ ISSUE 117**



## GRAND PRIX 4

You won't find a more accurate racing sim. Graphically lush and full of anal detail, Geoff Crammond's latest effort offers in-depth telemetry and a staggering number of options. *Grand Prix 4* is leading the grid in the world of racing sims.

**PUB Infogrames DEV** Simergy  
**PCZ ISSUE 119**



## COLIN MCRAE 2.0

This is still the benchmark rally title and looks set to remain so until *Colin McRae 3.0* appears. The graphics are fantastic, the detail is overwhelming and the cards handle beautifully. So if you are on the look-out for the definitive rally game, this is it.

**PUB Codemasters DEV** Codemasters  
**PCZ ISSUE 110**



## CRAZY TAXI

One of the best arcade conversions to the PC that we've seen for a long time. *Crazy Taxi* is a bright, colourful and in-your-face driving experience that's built on solid arcade values and good old-fashioned insanity.

**PUB Empire Interactive DEV** Hitmaker/Strangelite  
**PCZ ISSUE 119**



## MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

Buckle up for some high-speed action as you race around London and San Francisco. The original *MM* was a better, but with improved cars, races and controls, this is even better. We reckon it's the definitive arcade racer.

**PUB Microsoft DEV** Angel Studios  
**PCZ ISSUE 96**



## ◀ FLIGHT SIMS ▶

### IL-2 STURMOVIK



Combining incredible atmosphere, sound and visuals with possibly the most realistic flight model to date, *IL-2* puts you behind the flight stick of a number of stunningly reproduced WWII combat planes. The attention to detail is breathtaking and the easy-to-use editor allows endless months of replayability. A must-have for any real combat flight sim fanatic.

**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** 1C; Maddox Games

**PCZ** ISSUE 110



### MS FLIGHT SIM 2002

With more polish than previous versions, this professional edition offers players more planes, extra flight loggings and improved graphics. It might not be able to teach you how to fly, but it's the closest you'll get without paying for lessons.

**PUB** Microsoft **DEV** BAO

**PCZ** ISSUE 111



### BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Allow yourself to be immersed in one of the most exciting and realistic combat flight sims around. The action is non-stop, the skies are crowded and the flight models actually feel 'right'. Tally ho!

**PUB** Empire Interactive **DEV** Rowan Software

**PCZ** ISSUE 103



### FALCON 4

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* features incredible 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Microprose

**PCZ** ISSUE 72



### B-17: THE MIGHTY 8TH

*B-17* reproduces the experience of piloting a World War II bomber. Just about everything is covered, from planning missions to dropping bombs. A must for WWII and realism freaks everywhere.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Wayward Simulations

**PCZ** ISSUE 96

## ◀ 3D ACTION / STRATEGY ▶

### OPERATION FLASHPOINT GOLD



Now available with the tricky *Red Hammer* add-on, *Flashpoint* has become to tactical action what *Half-Life* was to shooters. Fight on foot or in tanks, fly planes or even direct an entire platoon, this game is total war – in your face and on a massive scale. The graphics are an acquired taste, but they convey a sense of wide-open warfare perfectly. It's the ultimate military simulation, with a stunning atmosphere and superb missions.

**PUB** Codemasters **DEV** Bohemia Interactive

**PCZ** ISSUE 104



### GHOST RECON

A superb squad-based shooter, which masterfully combines tactics and action. The levels range from wide-open landscapes to claustrophobic city streets, in what is a stunning evocation of special forces warfare.

**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** Red Storm Entertainment

**PCZ** ISSUE 110



### HIDDEN & DANGEROUS: DELUXE

This revamp of *H&D* removes all of the infamous bugs from the original, as well as including three extra campaigns. There's been a lot of work put in to improving the graphics and modding fans will relish the new editor that ships with this edition.

**PUB** Take 2 **DEV** Illusion Softworks

**PCZ** ISSUE 115



### HOSTILE WATERS

A brilliant RTS/action game you can play purely strategically or up close and personal. Inspired by the 16-bit classic *Carrier Command*, it's just a shame there aren't any multiplayer options.

**PUB** Rage **DEV** Rage Software

**PCZ** ISSUE 101



### GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

This mammoth and original 3D action/strategy game includes RTS, RPG, real-time and third-person shooter combat elements. It's also rather funny and features near-naked women with blue skin.

**PUB** Interplay **DEV** Planet Moon Studios

**PCZ** ISSUE 95

## ◀ ALL-TIME CLASSICS ▶

**EX-ZONER AND LONDON EXILE PAUL MALLINSON TOOK SOME TIME OUT FROM HIS NEW LIFE IN SUNNY CALIFORNIA TO FILL US IN ON HIS TOP TEN GAMES OF ALL TIME**



### TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2 (PC)

I like this version because of the soundtrack – a superb mix of punk, pop and hip hop – and the courses, which are simple and fast. I lost weeks to this game – perfecting the 'quit and restart' button combo within seconds (necessary when f\*\*king-up, which I did quite frequently). I'd love to jam with it right now.



### SYSTEM SHOCK 2 (PC)

This is probably the scariest game I think I've ever played. My kecks were in tatters in '99 when this came out. From the dramatic opening sequence (escaping a decompressing space station) to the final showdown with Shodan, *System Shock 2* proved a relentlessly enjoyable and memorable experience.



### DEUS EX (PC)

This game is special to me for two reasons. Number one: I was the first person in the world to review it. And number two: it is the best game I have ever played. Two things that don't happen very often. Crowds would gather to watch a demo of the game – and I would show them how to throw bodies out of tall buildings.



### DRAGONTORC OF AVALON (ZX SPECTRUM)

Programmed by Steve Turner and sequel to *Avalon*, *Dragontorc* was the first decent 'free-floating' action/adventure game. You played a druid who floated, legs-crossed, through dungeons, fighting weird monsters while solving basic puzzles. I was so impressed I wrote a 20-page game solution and sent it to *Crash* magazine.



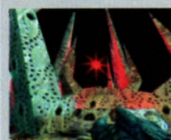
### DUNGEON MASTER (ATARI ST)

An absolute classic. In fact, I played through the entire game again just a couple of months ago and enjoyed every minute of it. How good a test of time is that? Back in 1987 when I had an Atari ST, I would skip college to play this game all day. In my underpants. For weeks. Then I eventually completed it, and got myself a girlfriend.



### SUPER TENNIS (SNES)

One sports game that I could really get 'zen' with. *Super Tennis* – somehow, by the power of magic – felt like you had true control over every stroke. Ahem. Games between experts became protracted showcases, but felt good to get involved in. I haven't played it in a while, but with a bit of practice I'd take on anyone.



### HALF-LIFE (PC)

Still incredible. I played from the beginning to the soldiers recently and it evoked very fond memories. As far as I'm concerned, *Half-Life* still hasn't been beaten in terms of story, dialogue, environment, plot progression and sheer excitement. And the game's almost four years old now. *Half-Life* is the 2001 of computer games.



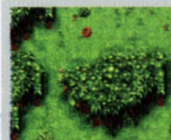
### QUAKE II (PC)

I like this game because we had the best LAN parties at *PC ZONE* playing it. Some nights we would have the entire team (Jezza, Chris, Macca, Brooker, Hill, Prezzer, etc), along with the magazine's art staff, all dragging each other for hours on end. We got beer in and just played and played.



### SUPER MARIO KART (SNES)

I don't think I've ever laughed so much at a game as I did at *Super Mario Kart*. The insane mix of Japanese humour, the bright colours and devious gameplay just hit a nerve with me. I used to play it for hours with my brother, especially the battle mode, which was tear-squintingly hilarious. Nintendo make incredible games and this is probably their best IMHO.



### CANNON FODDER (AMIGA)

The Amiga had many great games, but Sensible Software's mind-blowing *Cannon Fodder* ruled them all. It was one of the first ever real-time strategy games – real warfare, with tiny soldiers, over jungle and ice. Gameplay was brutal and tough – like real war. The PC version was shite, so don't bother with it. Amiga all the way.



**IT'S THE 92ND MINUTE. YOU'RE A  
GOAL DOWN. YOU ONLY HAVE TEN  
MEN LEFT ON THE PITCH. AND  
NOTHING BUT RUBBISH ON THE  
BENCH. BUT EVERYTHING IS FINE,  
BECAUSE YESTERDAY THE BOARD  
GAVE YOU A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.**

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# RETRO ZONE

YOUR REGULAR DOSE OF GAMING NOSTALGIA



"Its biggest problem was that the meat of the game – the flying bits – just weren't very good"



As, er, good as it looks. Ahem.

RETRO  
ZONE

JUNE  
1993

PC ZONE was launched, Comet Shoemaker-Levy headed for Jupiter and The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute declared '93s helmets as "a mixed bag". Paul Presley looks back on momentous days indeed...

## STRIKE COMMANDER

The more things change...

**THERE WAS** a time, many years ago, when the words "A Chris Roberts Production" would be followed by something other than the words "straight to video". *Wing Commander* was the biggest thing in PC gaming back in the early '90s whatever you thought



When the Middle East could still be used safely in game settings.

about it (check it out in Games That Changed The World on page 158). But like all tortured artists, Roberts was keen not to be pigeonholed. Hence *Strike Commander*. Which, naturally enough, proved to be little more than *Wing Commander* but with F-16s instead of space ships.

Basically it's set in the near-future and the world has fallen apart. Combat is in the hands of big business and missions are flown by freelance pilots like yourself. Gameplay-wise it was identical to its space-based cousin – watch an animation bit, pick a few options, fly a mission, watch some more animations, pick a few more options, fly another mission, repeat to fade.

Its biggest problem (aside from all the hype) was that the meat of the game – the flying bits – just weren't very good. This left gamers with fancy, yet uninvolved storyline populated mainly with oddly symmetrical talking heads who communicated all signs of emotion through eye movements (looks from side to side = guilty). It also demanded, as did everything from *Origin*, the absolute latest in PC technology. For good or ill, the game tanked, leaving Roberts to slink back to his one true love – the *Wing Commander* series, which he then spent the next six years working on until the 'classic' (for all the wrong reasons) motion picture. Lesson? Stick to what you're good at.



"Hi, I'm selling these fine leather jackets. Sorry, wrong game."

## THE BEST OF THE REST



### 3D GARDEN DESIGNER (PC)

Not strictly speaking a game, but it didn't stop Duncan MacDonald reviewing it anyway. I say review. It was more like a trip through the twisted mind of a frustrated Alan Titchmarsh as Dunc told the virtual tale of suburban warfare, Volvos and giant purple greenhouses. Easily the funniest thing PC ZONE has ever printed.



### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2 (Amiga/PC)

A classic strategy title that came far closer to capturing the essence of *Star Trek*'s big-ship battles than any 'officially licensed' title. You were in the Captain's chair, with freedom to do just about anything. The best part was its link-up feature with *Breach 2* for equally playable squad-based combat fare.



### STAR WARS CHESS (PC)

Ever since that classic moment in the first (fourth) film *Star Wars*, people have repeatedly tried and failed to recreate the chess match between R2-D2 and Chewie. This gave up before it started and resorted to ordinary chess but with *Star Wars* pieces that fought each other. It also failed. Ah well...



### ULTIMA VII, PART 2: SERPENT ISLE (PC)

When it comes to brazen, no one does it like *Origin*. A bug in the original *Ultima VII* that caused inventory items to just disappear was turned into an entire plot line for this semi-sequel. Brass cheek aside, *Serpent Isle* was still a damn fine RPG, back in the days when *Origin* meant business.

## NEWS

### GAMING NEWS FROM JUNE 1993

- *Wolfenstein 3D* was exactly one year old this month. PC ZONE celebrated by printing cheat codes that replace the wall textures with pictures of Page, three 'stunna' Samantha Fox – beginning a long history of offending sensitive readers with errant nudity in our pages.
- Unwitting PC ZONE 'celebrity', Mavis Beacon (of *Teaches Typing* fame) disputes our assertion of her non-existence by writing in to state otherwise. The ZONE office promptly embarks on a celebratory night out on the town, especially since she confirms an upcoming sequel to her educational classic.





## GAMES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## WING COMMANDER

**Richie Shoemaker looks back at the game that transformed thousands of PC users into PC gamers**

**GAME** *Wing Commander*

**DEVELOPER** Origin

**RELEASED** September 1990

**INFLUENCED** As a space combat game *Wing Commander* has influenced all that followed it, from *X-Wing* to *Freospace* and beyond. More importantly though, *Wing Commander* was a key turning point for the PC platform, proving that it could play host to bleeding edge games the likes of which other machines could only dream of.

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT,**

people didn't always buy PCs solely to play games. It wasn't just that PCs were expensive, bulky or downright ugly either. The fact was that back in the '80s the painfully slowly evolving PC was, as a games machine, barely capable of making audible sounds, let alone displaying graphics of the colour and complexity other home computers and consoles could pour out. What games did exist were conversions of arcade and other computer hits, like *Burger Time* and *Bruce Lee*. There was the perennial *Microsoft Flight Sim* of course, the odd role-playing game such as *Ultima* and a raft of Sierra adventures, but by and large the PC was on the fringes rather than forging ahead.

Fast-forward to today and the PC is at the forefront of games technology, from 3D graphics and sound to high-speed connectivity and massively online gaming. It's the fastest, most powerful and certainly the most adaptive games machine on the planet and, give or take the odd month when a new games console is launched, has been for the best part of the last decade. The question is, what caused such a change in the PC's gaming fortunes?

The simple answer isn't one of technology but of games. Just as *Halo* has sold the Xbox to thousands and *Metal Gear Solid* has done similar wonders for Sony's machines, if the PC was going to become a great games

platform it had to offer great games. *Wing Commander*, which was released in 1990, caught people's attention like no PC game before and was to be its first 'Killer App', the game thousands wanted, even if it meant spending hundreds of pounds on a PC to play it.

"If I had a penny for every time someone said to me they'd upgraded their PC or bought a soundcard just to play *Wing Commander*," says Chris Roberts, "I would have a hell of a lot of change."

**TIME MOVES ON**

Having started out developing games for the BBC Micro in his native Blighty, Chris Roberts found himself in 1987 working for Origin Systems in the US. His first game



**"As crazy as it may seem, there weren't that many problems during development"**

**CHRIS ROBERTS**  
WING COMMANDER CREATOR

SET 310

LOCK

AUTO TARGETTING  
Target: Dralkki  
Range: 1337

for the Texas-based developer was *Times Of Lore* on the Commodore 64, a *Gauntlet*-inspired fantasy role-playing game whose technical achievements were lost on a games-buying public that was migrating onto bigger and better machines.

"I designed the game to be loaded from tape as opposed to a disk drive and the end result was quite a technical achievement," he remembers.

"Unfortunately when it was released US gamers had started to move to IBM, so the fact that I had packed so much into 64K was lost on people who played games on computers with 384K and built-in disk drives.

"I decided then that my next game would be for the PC, and that I would use every bell and whistle I could with the available hardware, to deliver the biggest audiovisual punch I could. When I saw what Larry Holland was doing with 3D sprites in LucasFilm's WWII flight sim *Battlehawks 1942*, I decided there was no time like the present to create the game I had wanted to make from the moment I started programming."

Having worked with Denis Loubet on *Times Of Lore*, the pair embarked on what was to become *Wing Commander* in early 1988; Roberts programming, Loubet working on *Wing Commander's* trademark graphics.

"I wanted detail in the 3D ships that a PC could not deliver," recalls Chris. "At that time the best a PC could do was 3D wireframe or very basic flat polygons. It would be another three years before the PC could handle texture-mapped 3D objects."

#### SQUADRON LEADER

Roberts' vision for the game (originally called *Squadron*), was to help forge an experience more akin to a movie than a game, with a cinematic feel that would blur the distinction between scene-setting and interaction.

"I had always wanted to play a game that gave me the feel of a complete universe, like *Star Wars* or *Battlestar Galactica*," he says. "I wanted the *Wing Commander* universe to be immersive – an alternate reality with no hint that it was a game at all. I always felt that the

conventions of cinema, along with a nod of the head towards cinematic visual clichés, could go a long way to creating an immersive world for people – much in the same way as I was completely lost in the world of *Star Wars* when I first saw it."

#### INTO THE UNKNOWN

"As crazy as it may seem, there weren't that many problems during development," recalls Chris. "We never tweaked or balanced any of the missions – that is how good Jeff George's initial mission construction was... It just came together."

*Wing Commander* took 18 months to create from start to finish. After months working as a pair, the team would swell to more than eight full-timers and a number of freelance programmers, artists and sound specialists, one of whom was Erin, Chris's younger brother.

"*Wing Commander* gave me the chance to do my first design work," says Erin today. "I felt it was a really good game, and Chris had brought together a number of not only very original gameplay elements, but a movie-like story that would give the game a much wider

#### PROFILE

Although Chris Roberts has been the one that has shone in the spotlight, having created *Wing Commander*, directed a movie and recently completed the highly anticipated and much delayed *Freelancer*, brother Erin hasn't been too far behind. On his CV are leading roles on *Privateer 1* and *2*, *Starlancer* and *Strike Commander*. These two really do know their space games.



**NAME** Chris Roberts  
**FIRST GAME** *Wizardry* for the BBC Micro.  
**ROLE ON WING COMMANDER** Lead designer, producer and programmer.  
**NOW WORKING ON** Several film projects, as well as a new broadband game.



**NAME** Erin Roberts  
**FIRST GAME** *Knights Of Legend*. The first I was really responsible for was *Privateer*.  
**ROLE ON WING COMMANDER** AI, scripting and testing.  
**NOW WORKING ON** *Brute Force* for Xbox.



appeal. I don't think any of us thought it was going to be as big as it was, but we felt it was a very strong product."

"We were a kind of stealth project," adds Chris. "Ultima was Origin's cash cow and they had planned to exploit the franchise with spin-offs and sequels. On the Origin sales projections *Wing Commander* was an after-thought. After all we were a total unknown."

Just before the game's release, at the Consumer Electronics Show during the summer of 1990, the team first got an idea as to how well the game might be received. Having put together a rolling demo and looped it to run onscreen, the cinematic qualities of the in-game graphics drew generous crowds around the Origin booth, prompting the company's then vice-president of sales to offer a friendly wager.

"He bet me he would sell 100,000 copies on the PC in the US before the end of the year," recalls Chris. "Back then that was a huge number and foolishly I thought he was crazy, so I took the bet... and lost. I also had a pretty good idea that it was going to do well based on the other developers at Origin – instead of working on their games they were playing *Wing Commander*."

#### ABOVE AND BEYOND

"I think the first time I felt like we had delivered beyond my expectations was when we started reading the online comments. 'People weren't talking about which ship to use and who the most effective wingman was to finish such and such a mission, they were talking about the characters; how they hated Maniac, Paladin, Angel,



The FMVs took over in *WC 3*.



*Privateer* and its 1996 sequel were the best of the *Wing Commander* spin-offs, switching the mission-based campaign for an *Elite*-style trading dynamic.

The Kilrathi... It was like people were talking about a movie or a book, not a game."

Almost immediately Roberts began to work on expanding the series. By the end of 1991 *Wing Commander* had received two expansion packs and the sequel was done.

"With the first game we had ideas about real characters and cinematic convention, but the story arc and character development was pretty basic. Based on the success of *WC1* we realised we could exploit the medium to take the story to another level – essentially tell a good old-fashioned space opera inside the game. That is what we set out to do with *WC2*."

A monster well and truly created, with conversions planned for Amiga and Nintendo, work began on new sequels and spin-offs – some poorly disguised cash-ins like *Academy* and *Armada*, others as good as the original game. While Chris began work on *Wing Commander III*, brother Erin took his first leading role on *Wing Commander: Privateer*.

"I'm not really sure about the motivation behind *Academy* and

*Armada*, most likely the organisation was trying to exploit the property as much as possible," says Erin. "*Privateer* though had its roots set much deeper. *Privateer* was a chance to create the all-encompassing space exploration game. Weaving story, building your ship and wealth with exploration. Also as I was a huge *Elite* fan, it was my chance to salute the genre *Elite* founded."

"I realised that I could move the story-telling from the level of primitive cartoons to the believability and connection of real actors," says Roberts. "At the same time EA was willing to invest in pushing the envelope for the next edition of the game. They firmly believed in the multimedia future of gaming, having just invested millions in new equipment."

*WC3* offered another first for Roberts, the chance to direct real movie actors: Mark Hamill, John Rhys-Davies and Tom Wilson. Directing movie footage was easier than Roberts might have feared, the game went on to sell more than a million copies and became EA's biggest-selling PC game to date. EA wanted a fourth game made within a year, and when he caught sight of the unprecedented size of the budget, Roberts accepted. Already bitten by the directing bug he ploughed more resources into expensive FMV. For some it was the best in the series, *Wing Commander IV: The Price Of Freedom* was also the most expensive game ever made, more expensive than many Hollywood films at the time. It was also the last *Wing Commander* game Roberts would have a direct involvement in.

"I was burned out on creating *WC* again and again, and the sad fact was that although I could get as much money as I wanted to make another game, to have tried something more original my development funds would've been considerably less."

#### SIR LANCEALOT

After leaving Origin and EA behind, Roberts set up Digital Anvil in 1997, partly to work on a *Wing Commander* movie and also to oversee a new breed of space combat games that would build upon, though be quite distinct from, the *Wing Commander* series. While most were disappointed with the film and Digital Anvil's first game *Starlancer*, we've been waiting with bated breath for the sequel *Freelancer* (expect a review next issue), now in it's sixth year of development.

Today Chris Roberts looks back on the first *Wing Commander* with pride. "*Wing*

#### THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Chris Roberts wanted to push his idea of interactive storytelling even further with the next instalment. Now from within the deep pockets of new owner Electronic Arts, and with Origin and Roberts' team working on it, *Wing Commander III* could exploit the new medium of CD-ROMs.



One of the first games to introduce genuinely atmospheric cut-scenes. The 'Red Alert' scenes appeared after every mission and really got the blood pumping.

ALERT




## ON A WING AND A PRAYER

### IS WING COMMANDER DEAD?

There's a new *Wing Commander* game on the way and it may even be out by the time you read this. Unfortunately it's only being released for the Game Boy Advance and it isn't new, but a mini remake of the fifth in the series, *Prophecy*. After the false start that was *Privateer 3*, at least it shows EA may well resurrect what has been one of their most profitable franchises, especially since Chris Roberts has actually had some preliminary discussions with EA with a view to him working on a brand new *Wing Commander* game on PC. It's very early days, but rest assured we'll be nagging the poor man on a regular basis until he spills the beans. Keep your fingers crossed *Wing* nuts.

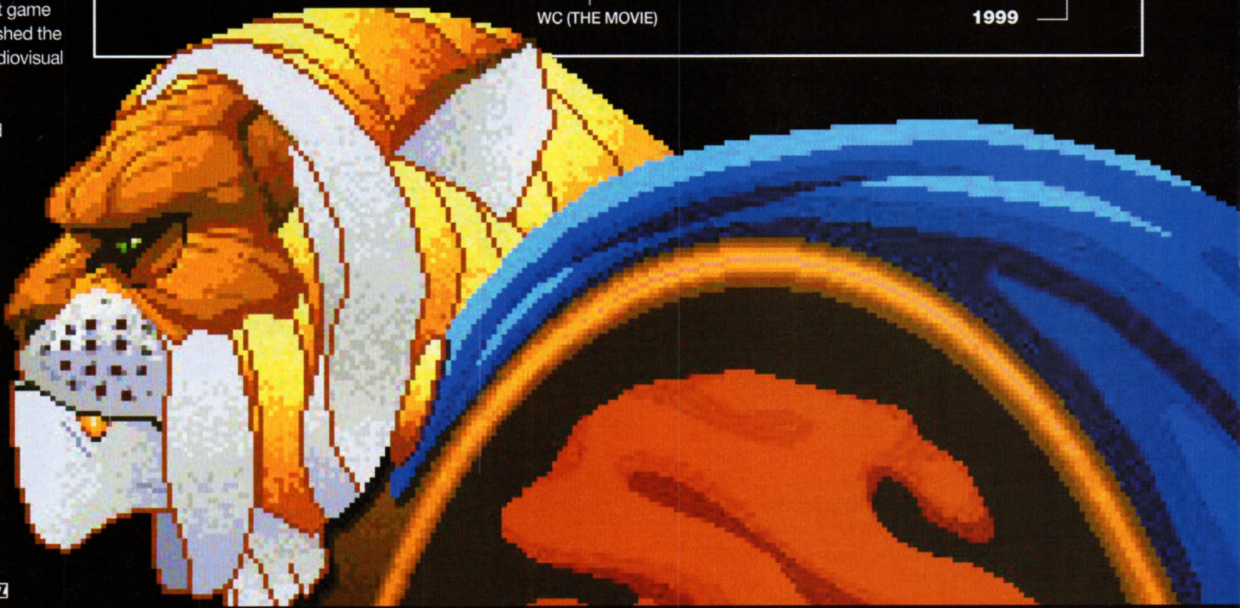
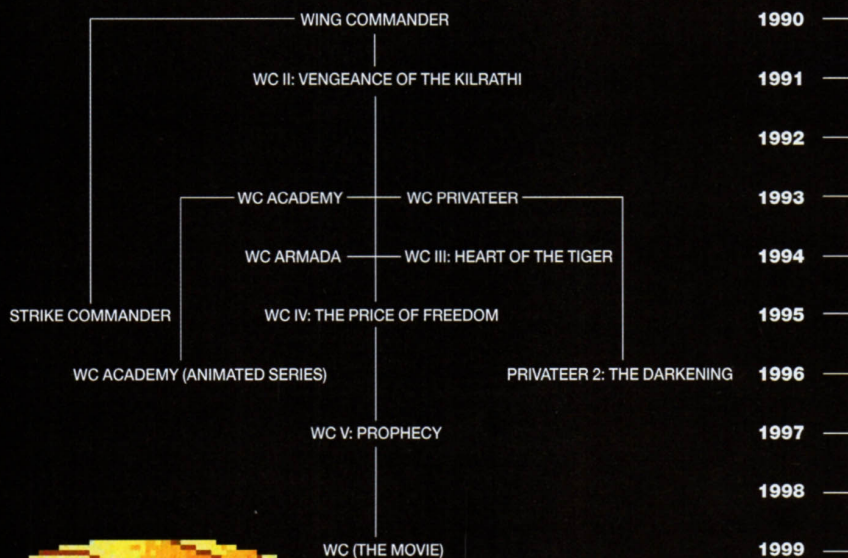
*Commander* was the first game that really delivered the promise of immersive storytelling inside a computer game. I certainly noticed a lot of the interface tricks and storytelling shorthand that we pioneered popping up in subsequent games, in more than just the space sim category. I also think it was the first game that showed developers if they pushed the hardware and thus delivered an audiovisual experience beyond the audience's expectation you'll be rewarded."

Brother Erin agrees: "It showed gamers that they should expect more. I think *Wing Commander* was one of the first games that really started pushing people's expectations... it was also one of those games that defined a genre, and had an impact on people that few games do. Selling well is nice, but making a game that is remembered 10-20 years later is much better."

"I have never made a game since or before where everything came together so smoothly and felt so right," says Chris. "If I had the chance to go back to my games I would say that the first *Wing Commander* would be the one game I would leave alone." 

## MEET THE WING COMMANDER FAMILY

FANS WILL KNOW THERE WERE FIVE *WING COMMANDER* GAMES IN THE SERIES, THE LAST OF WHICH IS REGARDED TO BE THE WORST, PARTLY BECAUSE CHRIS ROBERTS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. OF COURSE THERE WERE NUMEROUS SPIN-OFFS FROM THE SERIES, RANGING FROM THE SHODDY TO THE SUBLIME. LET'S NOT FORGET THE MANY ADD-ON PACKS, NOT TO MENTION BRAND EXTENSIONS, A TV SERIES, A FEW BOOKS AND OF COURSE... *THAT* FILM.



The familiar cockpit view, just you, your ship and a whole bunch of angry felines.



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STAND!

How joyous it is to work for a games magazine. What happiness, what wonderment the employees feel as they peel back the wrapping from a new game with the elation of a child on Christmas morning, and watch the installation bar with breathless excitement. Like a family they bond, and like a family they share, in play and in work. And now you too can share in this radiant happiness with this once in a lifetime offer, lovingly created to commemorate ten years of PC ZONE by unheard-of artist Oscar F. Schläpendick, and mass produced by peasants in Bogota\*.

This sublime piece of memorabilia embodies the joy of the PC ZONE team as their magazine reaches the ten-year landmark, and captures the true essence of what it is to be a games journalist. See how this happy group of movie-mag rejects are trapped in thirtysomething obscurity with a joke job no-one respects. See their detachment from reality as they display no concept of fashion, and share in the spirit of their wit-free monologues as they regale bored passers-by with tales of their exploits as Theodore Crapstroke III (a level 92.4

Paladin) in *Asberon's Call*, their words lilting like the morning song of a swallow carried by a cool morning breeze.

All the magic is here, captured in wax-crayon splendour for you to pass on to generations of your family (unless it breaks first) as a horrific warning of what can happen if you spend too much time around games.

Each plate is individually stamped with the seal of PC ZONE (while ink stocks last), comes with a lifetime warranty\*\* and can be yours for a mere 37 monthly payments of £24.99 (plus £199.99 p&p). Buy yourself and your loved ones a piece of history (think of the little ones). After all, why only enjoy PC ZONE once a month, when you can share in ten years of joy, for the rest of your life. But don't delay. Fill in and send us the form opposite and join in the birthday celebrations today!

\*All slave-labourers are treated in accordance with United Nations act 712.23, and are housed in UN regulation kennels (11x11x4 inches), and fed with only the finest decanted urine. Due to tropical diseases we cannot guarantee that each plate is handcrafted, although every effort has been made to provide prosthetics where applicable.

\*\*Warranty becomes void if plate is removed from packaging, touched, looked at, or comes into contact with pygmies or grown men called Toxoth.

☐ **Yes!** Please rush me my 10th Anniversary plate immediately. I bought this magazine by mistake and would love to have an image of you all to take into work and laugh at with my friends, who all have proper jobs and real un-inflatable partners.

Number of plates required:  
(please circle applicable) 1, 2, 3, 14, 312

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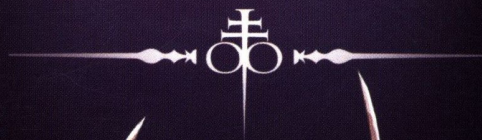
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